

Hafa Adai!

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OPINION METER

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Thousands of travelers are stranded by a blizzard that slams the Northeast.

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Guilty

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Govt agencies lose power, water

» **Central govt owes \$2.5M in utilities**

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. has disconnected the power and water lines of a number of government departments and agencies due to unpaid bills. **See GOVT on Page 4**

Orsini to chair new NMC search panel

» **NMC, ACCT revise application deadline to Jan. 15**

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

A member of the Board of Regents will serve as chairman of the new presidential search committee of the Northern Marianas College.

Andrew Orsini, however, is barred from voting in the final selection, except to break a tie.

The board adopted these guidelines Friday in a resolution that also revised the deadline for applicants to Jan. 15.

NMC announced yesterday the job vacancy for its president on its website. The Association of Community College Trustees first made the announcement on its website last week with the initial deadline

See ORSINI on Page 4



MOCHI FESTIVAL

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Misako Kamata and Hideaki Sawada of PDM Promoters Inc. assist a young boy pound the mochi during the Japanese Mochitsuki & Culture Festival on Monday at Paseo de Marianas in Garapan. Inset, a Marianas High School student volunteer demonstrates how to use a *takeuma* or Japanese stilts.

Story on Page 2.



New 10 to 12 cents gasoline price hike

» **Barely three weeks after another 10 to 12-cent hike**

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gasoline prices are now anywhere between \$4.129 and \$4.579 a gallon on Saipan after Shell Marianas and Mobil Oil Marianas increased their pump prices by another 10 to 12 cents a gallon yesterday, barely three weeks after these two oil giants hiked their prices, also by 10 to 12 cents a gallon.

Because of the two rounds of price increases, Saipan motorists have been paying 20 cents more for every gallon of gasoline they pump into their cars in December alone.

See NEW on Page 4



HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

A Shell price board shows the new rates for gasoline and diesel.

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Local

EAGI panel to recommend confirmation of nominee to CDA board

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

The Senate Committee on Executive Appointments and Governmental Investigations chaired by Sen. Frank Cruz (R-Tinian) will be recommending that the full

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
Merced "Marcie" Tomokane, center, is flanked by House minority leader Diego Benavente (R-Saipan), left, and Domi Govendo, right, after the Senate Committee on Executive Appointments and Governmental Investigations held a public hearing on Tomokane's reappointment to the Commonwealth Development Authority board of directors yesterday afternoon.



Senate confirm Merced "Marcie" Tomokane to the Commonwealth Development Authority board of directors.

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial reappointed Tomokane to the CDA board, where she served for two terms of four years each.

If confirmed by the Senate, Tomokane will be serving a third term that will expire in 2014.

The EAGI Committee held a public hearing yesterday on Tomokane's reappointment, and all those who testified asked the panel to support her confirmation.

After the public hearing, Cruz said that the committee will be recommending to the full Senate to confirm Tomokane on Thursday.

Cruz has been asking the governor to appoint individuals who will represent Tinian and Rota on government boards and commissions.

Press secretary Angel Demapan presented Tomokane to the Senate EAGI Committee yesterday.

"To state the obvious, Mrs. Tomokane is no stranger to the CDA board and to the areas of finance and banking. The nominee before you today exemplifies the true qualities of leadership and is armed with the necessary skills and experience in financial management and lending practices," Demapan told the senators.

Tomokane is currently the Bank of Guam vice president CNMI regional manager.

CDA board chair Manuel Sablan, Northern Marianas Housing Corp. director Joshua Sasamoto and House minority

leader Diego Benavente all testified in support of Tomokane's Senate confirmation.

It was Benavente, when he was still lieutenant governor, and former governor Juan N. Babauta, who appointed Tomokane to the CDA board for the first time.

Tomokane's colleagues at CDA were also present at the public hearing. Besides Cruz, the other EAGI Committee members present were Senate Vice President Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian), Senate floor leader Pete P. Reyes (R-Saipan), and Sen. Ralph Torres (R-Saipan).

Another public hearing

The Senate EAGI Committee will hold another public hearing on Thursday morning, this time on the nomination of two individuals to the NMI Retirement Fund board of trustees.

These governor's nominees are Nacrina A. Barcinas, representing Rota on the NMI Retirement Fund board, and Jerry P. Crisostimo, representing Saipan on the same board.

On Thursday afternoon, the Senate will also hold a session, and the Senate may act on Tomokane's nomination. Depending on the outcome of the public hearing on Barcinas and Crisostimo, the Senate may also act on their nominations that afternoon.

6 from Tinian recommended

The Tinian leadership also officially recommended to the governor six individuals to represent Tinian on different boards and

See EAGI on Page 4

Mochitsuki festival draws large crowd despite rain

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
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REPORTER

The drenching rain did not stop the Japanese Society of CNMI and PDM Promoters Inc. from going ahead with the Japanese Mochitsuki & Culture Festival on Monday, Dec. 27, at the Paseo de Marianas.

Members of the two organizations were at the forefront of the celebration that aims to promote the rich Japanese culture.

People who braved the rain to join the festival visited various food stands and amusement booths that highlight Japanese culture.

Food vendors included Country House, Capricciosa, E'sy Kitchen, Jonny's, Kimpachi Restaurant, and Furusato Restaurant.

The booths featured games and Japanese merchandise, including stalls for oshuji (Japanese calligraphy), takeuma (Japanese stilts), koma (Japanese tops), kendama (Japanese wooden toy), origami (paper folding), hanetsuki (Japanese traditional game similar to bad-

minton without a net), and take-tonbo (hand powered bamboo-copter or dragonfly).

Monday night's celebration was highlighted by the traditional mochi-pounding ceremony called Mochitsuki. Mochi is a Japanese rice cake made of glutinous rice, pounded into paste and molded into different shapes. Japanese Society and PDM Promoters members distributed free samples of three different flavors of mochi: sweet beans, soy sauce, and beans powder. All flavors of mochi were sold for \$2 per pack during the festival.

Despite the rain, Kagman High School senior Robin Romero went to the festival to try the free mochi with her mother and grandmother.

"When I was still young, my mother would bring home mochi from the store or from her Japanese friends. I like mochi. It tastes really good," Romero, 17, told Saipan Tribune.

Festival spectators were also treated to a performance by the Saipan Awaodori Group.

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Glimmer of hope in the creation of Rota public library

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
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REPORTER

The chances of opening the Rota Public Library have increased once again after the local government formally expressed its commitment and support in the efforts initiated by the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library.

Executive director John Oliver Gonzales said concerned individuals conveyed their concerns about the lengthy delay in opening the Rota Public Library during the cultural heritage presentation and workshop on Rota last Dec. 9.

"Cultural Heritage Collections in the CNMI: Doing Your Part" is part of the Connecting to Collections 2010 CNMI Cultural Assets Restoration Education Strategy project funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Studies.

About 20 individuals from Rota participated in the workshop conducted by Dr. Cecilia Lizama Salvatore of the Dominican University School of Library & Information Science in Illinois.

Gonzales said they conducted the workshop on Rota despite the island's nonexistent public library to identify their needs and enlist the support of the community in establishing their library.

According to Gonzales, workshop participants inquired why technical assistance and grant funding were being made available only to Saipan and Tinian.

"I had to be frank and cordial with them that they needed official commitment from the municipal office in opening the public library. We need that in order for us to strengthen and justify the needs for grant funding and technical assistance," he said.

Gonzales told *Saipan Tribune* that they got a letter from Rota Mayor Melchor Mendiola on Dec. 13 with their assurance to support all efforts to open the island's public library, to be situated next to the Northern Marianas College Rota Campus.

With this development, Gonzales said he will be sending

library associate Erlinda Naputi and Information Technology Center coordinator Roy Rechebei to Rota early next year to assess library needs as well as conduct a technology feasibility study to enable them to set up an ITC in Rota Public Library.

"Our goal is to have a functioning, meaningful library in Rota," he added.

According to Gonzales, the

opening of the Rota Public Library will serve a dual purpose. Not only will it provide recreation for island residents but it will also comply with the recommendation of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges to provide a library for the NMC-Rota Campus, he said.

Gonzales explained that they needed the commitment of the Rota municipality as it will

shoulder some of the expenses in setting up and running the public library.

Other expenses can be paid through the grants applied for by the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library, he said.

Gonzales said they would also need the commitment of the Rota delegation for funding and staffing for the public library through budget appropriations.



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Poolside

December 31, 2010
New Year's Eve Dinner Buffet and Countdown Party
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GOVT

From Page 1

Among these agencies are divisions under the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, whose personnel were sent home early yesterday noon due to the lack of power and water at their workplace.

In a visit to the office of DCCA Secretary Melvin Faisao yesterday, *Saipan Tribune* saw the closed offices of the secretary's office, the Policy Language Commission, the Child Care Development Fund Office, the Division of Youth and Services emergency shelter, and some offices of federally funded programs such as the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

Faisao confirmed that CUC crewmembers cut both the water and power lines in his office around 2pm yesterday.

CUC gave consideration, however, to DCCA's other divisions and programs and spared them—for now—from power and water disconnections, Faisao said. These include the Juvenile Detention Unit in Kagman and the Child Protective Unit, both under DYS.

CUC also cut the water connection at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium yesterday. Since the facility cannot be used without water, Faisao also sent home the gym's caretakers.

Saipan Tribune learned that an estimated 90 DCCA employees were placed on administrative leave since yesterday noon and were told to stand by today if they will be called to report for work.

DCCA, which has eight divisions under it, is under the Executive Branch and its utility consumption falls under the branch's accounts and billing.

Saipan Tribune learned that this was

the first time DCCA lost its power and water.

If the situation last for days, Faisao said this will affect the department's programs, including federally funded ones that have regular funding allocated for utilities.

Among the initiatives that will be affected are the payment processing for child care recipients, the tenants for foster care providers, translation notices of the government, and backlogs in many offices.

According to CUC executive director Abe Utu Malae and chief financial officer Charles Warren, a disconnection notice was first issued to these agencies prior to cutting the power and water lines.

They said CUC is required by law to issue disconnection notices but it decides to first work on "non-critical loads."

Warren said the central government

owes CUC nearly \$2.5 million to date, which reflects delinquent payments for August, September, and October.

He claimed that DCCA is not the only department affected by the disconnections. He said about 50 accounts were on the disconnection list. He did not elaborate.

"We did notify the CNMI government in advance... We had a meeting with the lieutenant governor today and we talked about payments and arrears. They're working on something to get the power back [tomorrow]," he told *Saipan Tribune*.

Under review

Press secretary Angel A. Demapan confirmed yesterday the meeting between the administration and CUC. He could not say, though, if the central government will immediately pay its arrears so that affected offices could return to

normal operation.

"The lieutenant governor did meet with CUC today to discuss this matter. In view of this development, the administration is now conducting a thorough review of outstanding billings for the Executive Branch and the finances of the affected accounts. It is not known yet when payment will be made or what arrangements will be proposed to address this matter," said Demapan.

He said the findings of the ongoing review "will largely dictate the necessary steps the administration will take to best address the issue."

CUC earlier disclosed that it has yet to collect nearly \$4 million from its biggest customers, resulting in its own cash-flow problems. These customers include the central government, the Public School System, and the Northern Marianas College—the Top 3 biggest clients with the highest delinquent accounts.

NEW

From Page 1

"It sucks to have another price increase. At the rate of their increase, I think people should now really start riding bicycles," said Steve Suzuki, who filled up his sedan with \$8 worth of gas at a Mobil service station on Middle Road yesterday afternoon.

He said his \$8 will now mean lesser amount of fuel for his sedan.

"We deserve lower gas prices, and please change the governor and the legislators because they're not doing their job. Everything is going up, even power. I would like to know how much the governor is paying for his power bill," Suzuki told *Saipan Tribune*.

Yesterday's price increase was the sixth since 2010 started.

Since February 2009, Saipan motorists have seen an increase of at least \$1.42 a gallon in gasoline prices.

Jack Dowai, a 30-year-old father of three, said his family would have to cut unnecessary trips so that they could stretch their limited money on gas.

"Every day, I put \$10 gas in my 4Runner. Maybe now, I will limit my trips so my \$10 gas can still last for a day," the San Jose resident said as he was filling up his vehicle tank at the Mobil gas station on Beach Road, Garapan.

Dowai said it would have been better if Mobil and Shell offer more miles or giveaways, to cushion the impact of the 10 to 12 cents increase.

Ariel Hidalgo, 42, said he was sur-

prised to learn that Mobil and Shell increased their prices again, only a few weeks after the previous one.

"Life is becoming more difficult on Saipan. My \$10 gas could last for three to four days if I only go to work and go back home. With this increase, I don't know, maybe my gas will only be good for two to three days," he said as he was filling his sedan with \$10 worth of gasoline at the Shell Highway Express on Middle Road.

The prices on display at Mobil and Shell service stations are only for self-service products, which are less costly than what most Saipan motorists pay for.

Self-service regular gasoline at all Mobil and Shell service stations is now \$4.259 a gallon because of the 10-cent increase.

Full-service regular gasoline at Shell and Mobil stations is now \$4.129 a gallon because of the 10-cent increase.

Shell and Mobil's self-service super/premium gasoline now costs \$4.449 a gallon, also because of a 10-cent a gallon hike.

Full-service super/premium gasoline is now \$4.579 a gallon.

Diesel went up by 12 cents a gallon, so motorists are now paying \$4.339 a gallon of diesel at Mobil and Shell stations.

Shell and Mobil do not issue advance notices of price increases. Saipan motorists know about such price changes by the price displays at gasoline service stations.

Ron Chisato, a boat crewmember, and boat captain Dave Litulumar, both from Seawind Marine Sports Club,

also frowned over yesterday's 10 to 12 cents increase in gasoline.

"It will be bad for businesses. We need to spend more for gasoline," Chisato said as he and Litulumar were filling up their company's marine sports boat with gasoline at the Mobil Garapan station.

They said they fill up the boat with \$80 to \$100 gasoline every single day, depending on the number of customers they have.

"We feel very disappointed with the increase," Chisato added.

Angel San Nicolas, a Kagman resident, said the costlier gas prices will make people limit their trips.

"To save money for gas, I think people will limit going to not important places," said the intern.

ORSINI

From Page 1

of Jan. 10.

Highly placed college sources initially bared that five individuals have been nominated to the seven-man search committee: Dave Sablan, Jesus Elameto, John Gonzales, Juanita Mendiola, and Orsini.

Two more members—one each from the faculty and student council—have yet to be identified as of last week.

Based on the resolution, the search panel, after interviewing all applicants referred by ACCT, shall recommend to the board at least two but no more than three applicants who best meet the advertised criteria.

It also stated that "a Board of Regents

member as the chair of the committee may not vote except on a tie." A support committee to the search committee will be provided by staff of NMC's Human Resources Office.

"The presidential search process should be open and transparent, inclusive, dignified, careful and methodical. While the process is open to public scrutiny, names and applications of applicants

will remain confidential until the final recommendations report is forwarded to the board," the resolution stated.

According to the board, once the ACCT refers the names of the pool of candidates to the search committee, committee members will review the reports of each candidate and conduct interviews. If the applicant is on-island, a personal interview will be done; if the

applicant is off-island, a telephone conference interview will have to do. The support committee will coordinate all logistics for the interviews.

The board will prepare a standard set of questions for the candidates' interview.

The NMC president post offers an \$80,000 annual pay plus benefits.

Applicants are required to sent packets and documents electronically to searches@acct.org and a paper copy must also be mailed to Dr. Narcisa Polonio, ACCT vice president at 1233 20th Street, NW, Suite 301 Washington, DC 20036.

EAGI

From Page 2

commissions with vacancies.

They include Jose M. Dela Cruz for the Civil Service Commission; Nathan M. Quichocho for the Commonwealth Development Authority board; James M. Mendiola Sr. for the Marianas Visitors Authority board; Richard U. Hofschneider Jr. for the Northern Marianas College; Ignacio "Ike" Perez for the Public Utilities Commission; and Peter Q. Cruz Jr. for the Marianas Public Land Trust.

Press secretary Demapan said this communication from the Tinian leadership" is still pending governor's review."

Hofschneider, chair of the Tinian Legislative Delegation, said he wants to make it clear that the Tinian leadership—which consists of the delegation, the Tinian Municipal Council, and Tinian Mayor Ramon Dela Cruz—is only "recommending" and it will still be up to the governor to appoint individuals whom he thinks are fit to serve on government boards and commissions.

The Saipan Tribune will be closed on Friday, Dec. 31, in celebration of the New Year.

There will therefore be no newspaper on Saturday, Jan. 1, 2011.

The Saipan Tribune Person of the Year and Year-end Reports will be published in the Dec. 31 edition of the newspaper.

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune
CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Officials justify South Korea junket

» Neo Gold Wings invited governor, but sent Demapan instead

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Officials said yesterday that a trip to South Korea paid for by Neo Gold Wings Paradise, the investor for a failed plan to build a \$1 billion hotel casino on Tinian, is not in violation of ethics laws.

Neo Gold Wings owes the Department of Public Lands over \$130,000 in outstanding land lease payments plus interests, and DPL had already revoked the land lease deal and ordered the investor to vacate a 300-hectare public land on Tinian.

Neo Gold Wings ignored notices from DPL to pay its monthly rent, until the department issued a notice to vacate the public land on Tinian in August.

Rep. Rafael Demapan (Cov-Saipan) and press secretary Angel Demapan separately said yesterday that should Neo Gold Wings pursue its \$1 billion project, it will be a big boost to the CNMI's sagging economy.

Neo Gold Wings also invited Gov. Benigno R. Fitial for the Dec. 17 "ceremony," but the governor sent Indigenous Affairs Office resident executive director Ignacio "Ike" Demapan instead to represent the Fitial administration.

The governor was in Palau for a Dec. 15 to 17 Micronesian

Chief Executives' Summit.

Besides Ignacio Demapan, the two others who went to South Korea were Tinian Mayor Ramon Dela Cruz and Rep. Demapan.

Rep. Demapan said yesterday the trip is also justified by the large investment that Neo Gold Wings could bring to the CNMI should it pursue its \$1 billion casino resort project.

"I don't see any conflict in that. The issue is not with the Legislature; it's with the Department of Public Lands," he told *Saipan Tribune*.

Rep. Demapan is the chairman of the House Committee on Judiciary and Government Operations.

Any lease of public land consisting of more than 5 hectares requires legislative approval. Demapan as a lawmaker may have to recuse himself from voting should Neo Gold Wings still pursue its project, involving 300 hectares of public land.

The CNMI Government Ethics Code, among other things, prohibits public officials/employees or immediate family members from soliciting or accepting from certain entities anything of value, including paying for travel expenses, hotel and lodging.

Officials on Capital Hill, however, did not want to comment

on a possible conflict of interest involving the officials who went on the South Korea junket.

The Office of the Public Auditor has yet to respond to media inquiries on the matter.

Prospect

Rafael Demapan said he accepted Neo Gold Wings' invitation to go to South Korea because of the prospect of having a \$1 billion investment in the CNMI.

"I wanted to observe whether the company is ready to pursue its project in the CNMI. I was there as a guest. It appears to me that the ceremony was genuine, and I am optimistic that they will be able to address their obligation to DPL," Demapan said.

He did not want to elaborate on the nature of the Dec. 17 ceremony in South Korea, but Dela Cruz said it was one to signify Neo Gold Wings' business partnership with a telecommunications firm.

Some community members said yesterday that Neo Gold Wings was able to pay for the trip of three CNMI officials, but has yet to pay a single cent to DPL for its over \$130,000 in outstanding land lease payments.

The Fitial administration said yesterday it can only comment on Ignacio Demapan's travel,

but not on the travel of a lawmaker and a mayor.

Proper

Press secretary Demapan, when asked for comment, said it was "proper to send a representative from the CNMI considering the benefits the CNMI stands to gain from this endeavor."

He said at a time when the CNMI is experiencing dire financial constraints, it must exert efforts to assist investors as much as possible to ensure that their investments stand a greater chance to flourish.

"We should not hinder their progress or in any way make

them believe we do not appreciate their investments, especially when they've chosen to do business in the CNMI at a time when there are more unknowns than knowns. The business culture of each country is unique and business in Korea is not only based on mutual opportunity but on personalities. They tend to appreciate active involvement and interest when proceeding with such an important investment," the press secretary said.

Neo Gold Wings had planned to build an ambitious \$1 billion, six-star hotel casino on a 300-hectare public land on Tinian.

No word

Public Lands Secretary Oscar M. Babauta reiterated yesterday that DPL has not heard from Neo Gold Wings whether it will pay its outstanding obligations to DPL or whether it will still pursue its casino project on Tinian.

Babauta said DPL will be more careful with Neo Gold Wings or with any other investor.

The press secretary also said all travels by government employees, whether paid by private or public entities, still require the employee to get an approved travel authorization.

"This is to ensure that there's a public purpose for the travel and that it is justified. Moreover, Mr. Demapan does not hold a regulatory position in the government, thereby eliminating any forms of impropriety," he added.

NMC English placement test update

The Northern Marianas College has announced an updated schedule for English placement tests for the spring 2011 semester:

■ Jan. 4 through Jan. 14, 2011 (except weekend): 9am to 3pm, Building M

■ Jan. 6, 2011 (Thurs) and Jan. 13, 2011 (Thurs): 4pm to 7pm, Building M

Those who wish to take the English placement test are strongly encouraged to contact the Language and Humanities Department to schedule

an appointment. "Walk-in" test takers will be accommodated based on seat availability. The average time to complete the English placement test is between 1.5 and 2.5 hours.

To schedule an appointment to take the English placement test or for more information, please contact Jim Kline at 234-5498 Ext. 2017, Tom Colton at 234-5498 Ext. 2009, or Elsie Skang-Nge-wakl at Ext. 2014.

Bring a valid photo ID to the test center. There is also

a \$25 placement test fee that must be paid in advance at the NMC Cashier (Monday-Friday, 8:30am to 4pm). No one will be allowed into the testing room without proof of payment: a receipt for the placement test fee or the NMC application fee. Payment of the application fee will cover the English placement test fee. If you have placement test fee waiver, get a placement test slip from the Office of Admissions and Records prior to taking the test. (NMC)

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Analyst says Fund's database system is 'unreliable'

»Trustees' next option: Scrap it or keep it

By **MONETH G. DEPOSA**
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The company hired to re-evaluate the long-delayed pension

database system for the NMI Retirement Fund said that the

new software needs new entries to allow it to function properly.

RR Associates analyst Ruffin Inos told the Fund's board

of trustees that inaccuracies in some of the database entries has set back work on the project.

Inos identified two serious

deficiencies in the yet-to-work software—data and calculation issues—with deficient results in calculations and inaccurate data recordings.

Inos described the problems as “fixable” but that it would require a series of more tests, which have yet to be conducted.

According to board chair Sixto Igisomar, the Fund has two options for the pension system software: either scrap it or keep it.

“However, our decision will be based on the result of the evaluation. We expect the company to submit a report before our next meeting and from those evaluations, the trustees will re-evaluate the report to come up with a decision whether to scrap it or keep it,” said Igisomar.

Based on the presentation itself, the new software seems to presents a lot of challenges, he said. “If it is something we can still work with or not...will depend on the reports.”

He asked RR Associates to provide a detailed analysis and how much time is needed to fix all of the system's problems.

An independent audit report on the Fund for last fiscal year disclosed that the agency's vendor for the database system project violated the contract after it failed to implement the project, despite being already 90-percent paid. This was just one of the five audit findings noted in the 2009 audit report.

Saipan Tribune learned that the cost for the project has already gone beyond initial estimates of \$190,000. It was supposed to be completed in 2008.

Igisomar earlier said that if the pension software fails to function as expected, the Fund may consider taking legal action against the vendor, which he refused to name.

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MELL SENTOSA	048E	12/18 Sat	12/16 Thu	12/16 Thu	12/14 Tue	12/11 Sat	12/24 Fri	12/20 Mon	12/19 Sun	12/12 Sun	12/12 Sun	12/20 Mon	12/24 Fri	12/26 Sun	12/28 Tue
MELL SPRINGLEAF	014E	12/25 Sat	12/23 Thu	12/23 Thu	12/21 Tue	12/18 Sat	12/31 Fri	12/27 Mon	12/26 Sun	12/19 Sun	12/19 Sun	12/27 Mon	12/31 Fri	1/2 Sun	1/4 Tue
MELL SILOSO	015E	1/1 Sat	12/30 Thu	12/30 Thu	12/28 Tue	12/25 Sat	1/7 Fri	1/3 Mon	1/2 Sun	12/26 Sun	12/26 Sun	1/3 Mon	1/7 Fri	1/9 Sun	1/11 Tue
MELL SENTOSA	049E	1/8 Sat	1/6 Thu	1/6 Thu	1/4 Tue	1/1 Sat	1/14 Fri	1/10 Mon	1/9 Sun	1/2 Sun	1/2 Sun	1/10 Mon	1/14 Fri	1/16 Sun	1/18 Tue
MELL SPRINGLEAF	015E	1/15 Sat	1/13 Thu	1/13 Thu	1/11 Tue	1/8 Sat	1/21 Fri	1/17 Mon	1/16 Sun	1/9 Sun	1/9 Sun	1/17 Mon	1/21 Fri	1/23 Sun	1/25 Tue
MELL SILOSO	016E	1/22 Sat	1/20 Thu	1/20 Thu	1/18 Tue	1/15 Sat	1/28 Fri	1/24 Mon	1/23 Sun	1/16 Sun	1/16 Sun	1/24 Mon	1/28 Fri	1/30 Sun	2/1 Tue

Inbound from Asia	Voyage No.	ETA Guam	ETA Saipan	ETA Yap	ETA Koror	ETA Davao	ETA GenSan	ETA Cebu	ETA Hongkong	ETA Kaoshiung	ETA Busan	ETA Yokohama	ETA Manila	ETA Singapore
MELL SENTOSA	048E	1/1 Sat	1/2 Sun	1/2 Sun	SKIP	1/5 Wed	1/7 Fri	1/9 Sun	SKIP	1/14 Fri	1/15 Sat	1/20 Thu	2/8 Tue	1/23 Sun
MELL SPRINGLEAF	014E	1/8 Sat	1/9 Sun	1/9 Sun	1/11 Mon	1/12 Wed	1/14 Fri	1/16 Sun	SKIP	1/21 Fri	1/22 Sat	1/27 Thu	2/15 Tue	1/30 Sun
MELL SILOSO	015E	1/15 Sat	1/16 Sun	1/16 Sun	SKIP	1/19 Wed	1/21 Fri	1/23 Sun	SKIP	1/28 Fri	1/29 Sat	2/3 Thu	2/22 Tue	2/6 Sun
MELL SENTOSA	049E	1/22 Sat	1/23 Sun	1/23 Sun	1/25 Mon	1/26 Wed	1/28 Fri	1/30 Sun	SKIP	2/4 Fri	2/5 Sat	2/10 Thu	3/1 Tue	2/13 Sun
MELL SPRINGLEAF	015E	1/29 Sat	1/30 Sun	1/30 Sun	SKIP	2/2 Wed	2/4 Fri	2/6 Sun	SKIP	2/11 Fri	2/12 Sat	2/17 Thu	3/8 Tue	2/20 Sun
MELL SILOSO	016E	2/5 Sat	2/6 Sun	2/6 Sun	2/6 Sat	2/9 Wed	2/11 Fri	2/13 Sun	SKIP	2/18 Fri	2/19 Sat	2/24 Thu	3/15 Tue	2/27 Sun

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Milk sampling at Han Nam today

Foremost Foods Saipan will conduct a milk sampling for its newest product at Han Nam market in Kolblerville from 4pm to 6pm today.

Foremost Non-Fat Milk was officially launched on Saipan during the Health and Wellness Fair last Nov. 20.

The company already held milk samplings at Triple J Super Fresh Market in Chalan Kanoa and Joeten Hafadai Shopping Center in Garapan this Dec.

Glen Hunter, group business manager for Transpacific International Inc., touted the health benefits of non-fat milk, saying it "offers all the health benefits of milk—without the fat. Milk is an important part of any diet and Foremost now offers a variety for those looking at lowering fat intake."

Women, Infant & Children Program recently approved Foremost's latest product. Program beneficiaries with WIC voucher indicating "1 percent and skim milk" may select the Foremost Non-Fat Milk as a healthy substitute.

Non-fat milk is frequently considered superior to whole milk. One study noted that an 8-oz non-fat milk contains more protein, more calcium, more potassium, and less cholesterol. Non-fat milk also reduces muscle damage, improves muscle recovery, refuels muscles with carbohydrates, as well as help regulate weight loss.

Foremost Non-Fat Milk comes in quart size and is available in most retail stores in the CNMI. (Clarissa V. David)

Hard Rock to host dance contest on Dec. 31

Hard Rock Café Saipan will set the stage for the biggest dance showdown before the year ends when it hosts "Step Up Showdance" at 9pm on Friday.

Step Up Showdance is a dance competition that aims to recognize and showcase the talents and skills of island residents.

Operations manager Reynaldo Perez said contestants will compete for the Marianas Showdance King & Queen titles and \$100 grand prize. There will also be certificates of appreciation for all participants.

Perez said the competition is open to solo, duo or group dancers.

This will be the first time Hard Rock Café will hold a dance competition on New Year's Eve.

"We will announce the winners before the New Year's countdown. Hopefully, this will attract more people to go to Hard Rock to celebrate New Year," said Perez.

Perez said they will also spice up their New Year's Eve countdown with DJ Kaye's spinning party music for all Hard Rock guests.

For more information, contact Perez at 233-7625 or visit Hard Rock Saipan's Facebook account. (Clarissa David)

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Navy Hill and Dandan location will be open on Friday, December 31st from 8am to 4:00pm.

Navy Hill (CHC) location is open on New Year's Day, January 01, 2011 from 8am to 4:00pm.

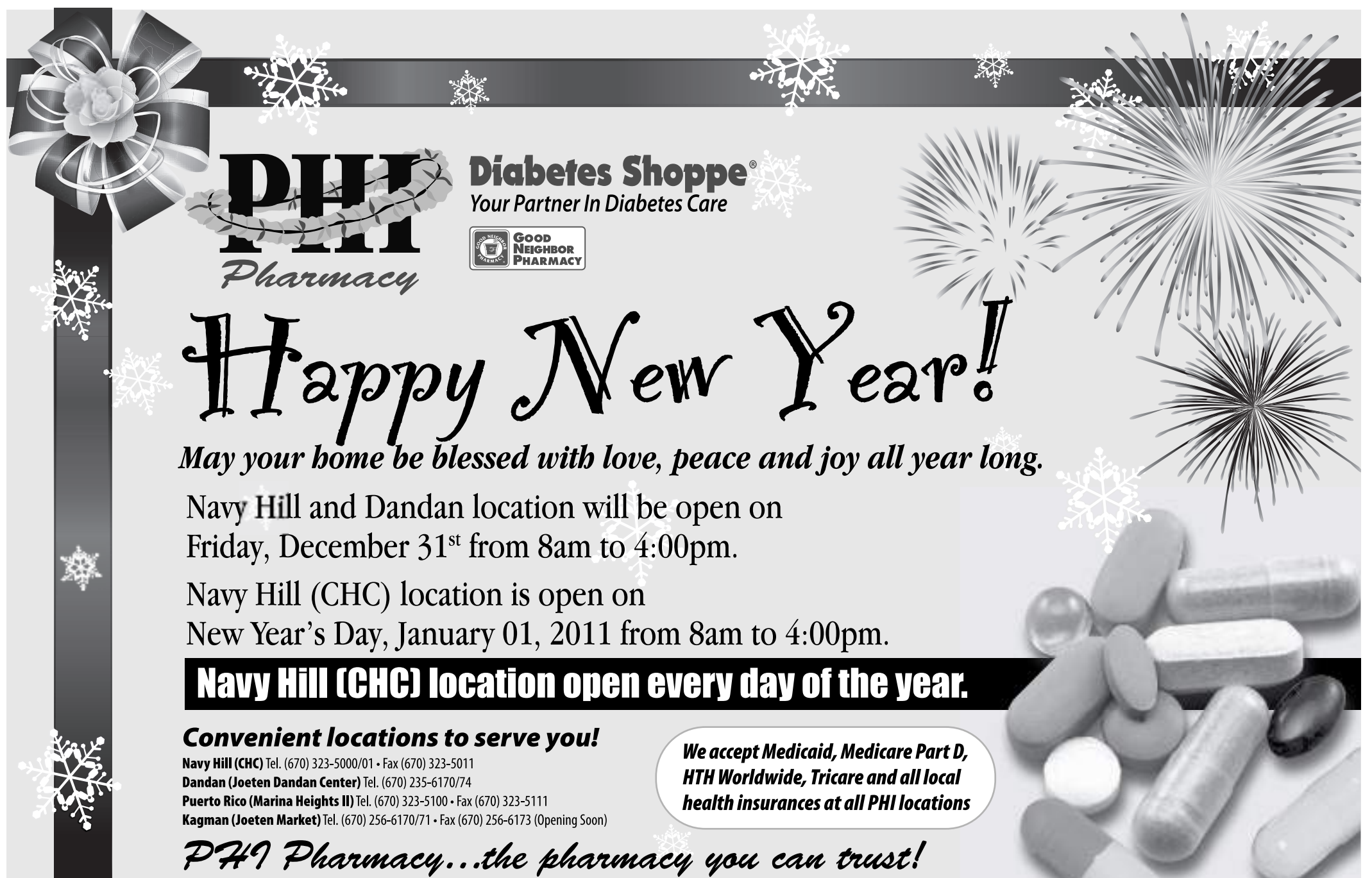
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House panel pushes for local jobs

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The House Committee on Federal and Foreign Relations wants to know from the Department of Labor whether there are indeed some 6,500 jobs that locals or U.S. citizens in the CNMI can apply for.

Committee chair Rep. Frederick P. Deleon Guerrero (Ind-Saipan) said many of these po-

sitions may be held by foreign workers who have technical expertise and will be impossible to be filled with local or U.S. citizen workers here. He was referring to positions such as nurses, doctors and engineers, among other things.

Deleon Guerrero said the committee has set up a meeting with Labor officials on Jan. 6 at 10am, to receive data

from the department on the number of jobs that are available and can be applied for by locals and U.S. citizens.

"I want to make it clear that I don't have anything against foreign contract workers. They're very much a part of our economy, but at the same time, we also want to think about our own local people, U.S. citizens. The transition period is

not going to be easy for everyone," he said.

His committee met on Monday to tackle the newly released E-2 CNMI investor rule which, among other things, allows eligible foreign long-term investors with a minimum of \$50,000 instead of \$150,000 in investments to remain in the CNMI through Dec. 31, 2014.

Deleon Guerrero said he also looks forward to the release of the transitional worker rule next year.

Senate president seeks update on CIP funding for Rota power

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Senate President Paul Manglona (Ind-Rota) has asked the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. to pro-

vide an update on capital improvement project funding to overhaul Rota's power generation.

The Rota Legislative Delegation reprogrammed monies during the 16th Legislature for

the overhaul of CUC engines on Rota. Manglona said CUC has two Mitsui generators of 2.5 megawatt each.

"But I understand that the funds provided are sufficient to

overhaul just one of these generators. CIP funds have also been allocated for the purchase of a bucket truck, and the purchase of two generators CUC is expecting to receive in the next 90 days," Manglona said in a letter to CUC executive director Abe Malae.

As of yesterday, Manglona said he has yet to receive a response from CUC on his Dec. 21 letter.

The Senate president said in the past, CUC was forced to buy power from private producers, and may again be forced to do an emergency purchase agreement because of the delay in the procurement of the generators and the completion of badly needed repairs.

"Can you please provide an update on these CIP funds and the status of Rota's power generation capacity," Manglona asked Malae.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Cervical Cancer Awareness Month proclamation on Dec. 30

January is Cervical Cancer Awareness Month, and this Thursday, Dec. 30, 2010, there will be a proclamation signing at 9:30am at the Saipan Mayor's Office. For more information, contact Kimberly Sablan of the Comprehensive Cancer Control Program at 236-8728. (PR)

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

NELLY D.L.C. BUMANGLAG Plaintiff,

CIVIL ACTION NO. 00-275

-v-

LINDA D.L.C. TOVES, CONSOLATION D.L.C. TOVES, ANA C. DELA CRUZ, ANTONIO C. DELA CRUZ, RAMON C. DELA CRUZ, JOSEPHINE P. DELA CRUZ, and the Estate of MANUEL T. DELA CRUZ, deceased Defendants.

SECOND AMENDED NOTICE OF SALE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to Judgement issued by the Court in this matter on January 26, 2009, I will sell, at public auction, to the highest bidder, on the terms and conditions set forth hereinbelow, all of the right, title, and interest of Defendants in and to the following property: Tract No. 21729, situated in I-Denni, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, containing an area of 46,660 square meters, more or less, as more particularly described on Drawing/Cadastral Plat No. 2038/72, registered with the Land Registry as Document No. 7912, dated January 23, 1979.

Date, Time and Place of Sale. The sale will be held on Friday, January 7, 2011 at the hour of 1:30 p.m., at The Law Offices of Michael A. White, LLC, Joeten Center, Susupe, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. The sale will be open to the general public.

Terms and Conditions of Sale. The Terms and Conditions of Sale may be obtained from the undersigned, either prior to or at the sale. These terms and conditions shall govern the conduct of the sale.

DATED, this 2nd day of December, 2010.

/s/ Michael A. White, Auctioneer

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

Dec. 29, 1998

Senator aims to halt retirement trick

Senate Vice President Thomas P. Villagomez said yesterday he would seek to bar the government from hiring retirees in a rider provision to his proposed legislation removing the 30 percent retirement bonus for civil service employees. He maintained the amendment will stop the flood of retired employees from seeking re-employment in the government in what he claimed a rampant practice to raise their pension. "People retire only once but only in the CNMI you see people retiring more than once," Villagomez told in an interview. "There are people here who have retired, but have gone back to work in the government so they can get a fat pension pay."

CNMI files tobacco lawsuit

A lawsuit, which is required to be filed by the CNMI government in order to get its \$15.8 million settlement payment from tobacco manufacturers, was filed in court last week and subsequently dismissed by the court. Presiding Judge Edward Manibusan dismissed the complaint with prejudice and signed the consent decree and final judgment entered between the CNMI and Brown & Williamson Tobacco Corp., Liggett Group Inc., Lorillard Tobacco Co., Philip Morris Inc., R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co., United States Tobacco Manufacturing Co. Inc. and United States Tobacco Sales and Marketing Co. Inc.

Dec. 29, 1999

Legislative legal counsels told to join AGO in PCB lawsuit

The House of Representatives yesterday joined the Senate in drawing attention anew on the polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) contamination in Tanapag as it launched an investigation into the costs incurred by the CNMI in dealing with the worsening problem. Members of the 18-seat chamber adopted a joint resolution asking both the House and the Senate legal counsels to conduct the probe as well as to work with the Attorney General's Office in seeking compensation and reparation for all the costs associated with ensuring health and environmental safety for village residents. A separate joint resolution from the Senate was also adopted during yesterday's session by the lower house in which legislators pressed government lawyers to file a lawsuit to compensate victims, reimburse the CNMI and clean up Tanapag of the highly-toxic chemicals abandoned by the U.S. military.

Budget deliberation begins

With 15 members present yesterday, the House of Representatives began floor deliberation on the budget bill with minority members questioning several provisions, including allocating lapse funds from personnel for payment of 5 percent across-the-board salary hike for government workers. Discussion is expected to resume today, but it is not certain whether the proposed FY 2000 budget will be approved in time for the Senate to act on it, according to lawmakers. Senators postponed their scheduled session today for January 4, their last before adjourning sine die for the inaugural of the 12th Legislature.

Dec. 29, 2000

New law regulates finance companies

Finance companies granting consumer loans other than banks are now subject to regulatory measures to be implemented by the CNMI government in an effort to reduce risks to both the island residents and business owners. Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio yesterday signed into law the bill providing for licensing and regulations of these small-time companies, while imposing penalties to protect consumers from unscrupulous business practices. "This measure is necessary for there is a need for legislation to regulate financial institutions doing business in the Commonwealth," he said in signing Public Law 12-36.

GSM gets additional funds from MVA

With the reduction in monthly losses, the Marianas Visitors Authority Board has approved \$13,000 funding for the continuation of Garapan Street Market next year. Losses in the weekly Street Market project has been reduced from \$1,500 to \$1,300. So far, MVA has already spent \$12,400 from fiscal year October 2000 to December 2000 for entertainment and advertising. MVA earns a measly \$800 a week from rentals of the concessionaires and advertisement. MVA Board Chair Dave M. Sablan has reminded the staff to encourage students from different schools to perform every week to entice the young people and their parents to visit the street market.



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

Office of the Executive Director



INVITATION FOR BID

CUC-IFB-11-013 (RE-BID OF CUC-IFB-11-006)

SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF POLE MOUNTED TRANSFORMERS

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Supply and Delivery of Pole Mounted Transformers for the CUC Power Division in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The bid package may be picked-up at the CUC, Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room 4, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Dandan, Saipan between 7:30 AM to 11:30 AM and 12:30 PM to 4:00 PM, Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays.

One (1) original and Six (6) copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "CUC-IFB-11-013, Supply & Delivery of Pole Mounted Transformers", to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 4, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **January 7, 2011 at 10:00 AM, (ChST)** at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before due date and time. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.

A Bid Guarantee of 15 percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The bid security may be on a bid bond, in cash, by certified check, cashiers check or other form acceptable to CUC. The surety company shall hold a certificate of authority from the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General. A Performance Bond of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidder. Surety company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands or otherwise secured in a manner satisfactory to CUC and acceptable to the Attorney General. A Payment Bond of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands or otherwise secured in a manner satisfactory to CUC and acceptable to the Attorney General.

All insurers questions, concerns and qualification be should handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid or supply under the contract.

The IFB does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the bid under this request, or to procure or contract for goods. Bid award will be given to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder whose bid is responsive to all specification and requirements.

Bidders will also be required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) local time on **December 30, 2010** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, Jr., CUC Purchasing Officer, via email - msablan@cucgov.net with a copy to Mr. John Onedera, Power Division Engineer- johno@cucgov.net and Ms. Janina Mika Muna, Admin. Support Assistant, Procurement & Supply - mika_muna@cucgov.net.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

/s/ UTU ABE MALAE
Executive Director

Court orders arrest of man who disturbed peace on Christmas Day

The NMI Superior Court issued an arrest warrant for a man who disturbed the peace

on Christmas Day and threatened his neighbor, which led to additional charges of criminal

trespass and criminal mischief. An arrest warrant was issued for Benjie Ngeskebei Jr. on Dec.

26 at 4:05pm and a \$2,000 bail was set for his temporary release. Based on the declaration of

probable cause in support of the issuance of arrest, Ngeskebei was found in violation of laws of the Commonwealth Criminal Code and was charged with disturbing the peace, criminal trespass, and criminal mischief.

Saipan Tribune learned that on Dec. 25 at approximately 10:02pm the Department of Public Safety received a call from Trina Lee Sablan, who reported a disturbance at her residence in Koblerville.

Preliminary report indicated that Sablan was outside her garage when she heard a noise on the road. She described the noise as a vehicle burning rubber, driving back and forth in front of her residence. The woman then recognized that it was her neighbor Ngeskebei who was driving a pickup.

Sablan added that Ngeskebei, besides driving back and forth in front of her house, also shouted at her and started throwing broken pieces of cinder blocks toward her that caused moderate damage on her father's vehicle that was parked on the driveway. Also in the driveway was Sablan's 7-year-old daughter, who was scared of what happened.

Sablan immediately called the police for help.

The court heard the case yesterday, with Michael Brown representing the defendant. The government was represented by assistant attorney general Tiberius Mocanu.

The court ordered the suspect, upon posting of bail, to stay away from the victim. Arraignment is on Jan. 10 at 9am. *(Moneth G. Deposa)*

Guam's Rotary Club ends year with several charitable efforts



Shown at the Sea Grill Restaurant on Nov. 24 are, fourth from left, Maureen N. Maratita, Community Service director for the Rotary Club of Guam; fifth from left, Mayor Melissa Savares of Dededo; sixth from left, Mayor Carol Tayama of Agat; and right, Victoria G. Borja, president of the Rotary Club of Guam, surrounded by volunteers from Dededo and Agat.

ROTARY

The Rotary Club of Guam capped the year 2010 by supporting a number of charitable endeavors, including the 2010 Christmas Drop, the Rotary Club of Guam Turkey Drive, and the Sugar Plum Tree. The Rotary Club of Guam thanked several clubs and organizations for their participation.

The 2010 Christmas Drop effort from Andersen Air Force Base drew support from the Rotary clubs on island and elsewhere.

The Rotary Club of Guam, Rotary Club of Tumon Bay, Rotary Club of Northern Guam, Rotary Club of Guam Sunrise, and the Rotary Club of Tokyo Tachikawa contributed medical kits, medical supplies and non-perishable food to the value of more than \$5,000. The non-perishable food was arranged through Dickerson & Quinn, which also donated additional items in the value of more than \$1,000. Labels were prepared

by Sharp Business Systems.

The Rotary Club of Tokyo Tachikawa also contributed the sales proceeds of its book about the Christmas Drop to purchase parachutes for the drop.

Parker Bros., Hensel Phelps and International Consolidated Contracting donated tools to the Christmas Drop on behalf of the Guam Contractors Association.

In addition, the Rotary Club of Guam ran a Thanksgiving Turkey Drive for villages of the Mayors Council of Guam and others on Nov. 24, donating meal sets for about 1,000 people. Aside from club member donations, the drive was supported by Home Depot, Glimpses of Guam, Foremost Foods, Hawaii Intercontinental, Sharp Business Systems and Sea Grill.

Other support of the Rotary Club of Guam so far in the 2010-2011 year includes the Sugar Plum initiative, which received \$1,000 from the club. *(Rotary)*

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**National/CNMI Holiday Season
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November 29, 2010 through January 3, 2011**



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Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

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Sex and WikiLeaks

According to a classified and unusually salacious Swedish police report obtained by the Guardian newspaper, WikiLeaks mastermind Julian Assange went to dinner in August with a woman identified only as "Ms. A." When they returned to her Stockholm apartment, he began stroking her leg. Then, although she says she thought things were moving too quickly and uncomfortably, he was pulling off her clothes and snapping her jewelry. According to her complaint, he pinned her arms and legs to stop her from reaching for a condom. He finally agreed to wear one, but continued even after the condom broke, or after he had "done something" that broke it, as Ms. A put it.

Because of that alleged encounter and an oddly similar one with a "Ms. W" (who claims that he had unprotected sex with her while she was asleep and later "ordered her to get some water and orange juice" for him), Assange is wanted for questioning in Sweden over allegations of sexual misconduct, including rape.

These titillating and not-very-nice allegations involving the man who has distributed tens of thousands of secret State Department cables and documents to the news media are being discussed by people across the country and around the world, just as they once discussed the tiniest particulars of President Bill Clinton's Oval Office trysts with Monica Lewinsky. And as they discuss the details, they're also raising serious questions about how sexual misconduct should be dealt with: Should a man be charged with rape for having sex without a condom? For having sex with a woman when she's asleep?

In recent decades, Sweden's laws have grown increasingly protective of women's rights; are they too tough, or do they strike the right balance? Does it make sense that Sweden has three degrees of rape, including "less severe," which is generally used when a person uses threats or mild force to have non-consensual sex?

These questions are intriguing but are ultimately beside the point when it comes to Assange's role in WikiLeaks. For Americans chiefly concerned with the publication of classified documents, his alleged sexual escapades in Stockholm are neither here nor there; the only germane question about the allegations is whether the legal process is taking its proper course, or whether there's been some nefarious American pressure brought to bear. Assange's supporters have insisted that the rape charges, which at one point had been downgraded to "molestation," have been reinstated by the Swedish authorities as part of a U.S.-inspired campaign to punish Assange and WikiLeaks for releasing classified information, and perhaps to put him behind bars until American prosecutors can file charges against him.

We've seen absolutely no evidence of this. It's apparently not uncommon in Sweden for such charges to be downgraded and then reinstated. If in fact the United States was applying pressure—for Assange's arrest or for restoring the charges or for his extradition from Britain to Sweden—that would be highly inappropriate. If Assange's defenders unearth any proof of that, they should by all means make it public. Until then, we hope the case will proceed fairly and in accordance with Swedish law.

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The end of economic growth

"Your car is Japanese. Your pizza is Italian. Your potato is German. Your wine is Chilean. Your democracy is Greek. Your coffee is Brazilian. Your tea is Tamil. Your watch is Swiss. Your fashion is French. Your shirt is Indian. Your shoes are Thai. Your electronics are Chinese. Your vodka...is Russian. And YOU COMPLAIN that your neighbor is an immigrant? ..."

This paragraph flamed across the Internet in digital wildfire, and it is perhaps a sign of the times to see the truth of the above statement to be taken for granted when 40 years ago, globalization was a voice of prophecy; the ideal of the market economy is then for diverse production to define national boundaries. America of WWII showed what that might look like, and it served as a paradigm for all the rest of the world to follow.

In 1968, a group met in a Roman villa and issued *The Limits of Growth*. It took Thomas Malthus' exponential growth of population v. the linear growth of food production that buttered the doomsday scenario of survival of the fittest. The Club of Rome compared population growth with the carrying capacity of the environment, and another doomsday scenario ensued that media summarily dismissed, not for accuracy but for the maudlin attitude it elicited.

It's been our practice to look at decades and discern the *external situation* that creates an *internal response* (usually a crisis) leading to a *life question* (the Europeans labeled it "existential") that we either *address*, or *escape* from. Augustine's original sin had humans run away from authentic reality, not an altogether inaccurate description of a universal response.

Old schoolmate John Epps, who now resides in Malaysia, used the same format and saw that in '70s we experienced *expanded horizons*. The globe intruded into our living rooms with Vietnam and the oil crisis. Our internal experience was a yearning for commonality. We sensed the underlying unity of people everywhere. Our existential question was, "How can I participate?" and we withdrew into navel watching or into the cheap euphoria of drugs. Some developed technologies of participation. Community brainstorming and consensus building became our new mantra.

The '80s grappled with *diversity*. We staked our position: *Here I stand, so help me!* But there were many legitimate positions; with the demise of eternal verities, we became resigned to mindless relativism. We sought personal integrity; movements returned to golden ages. "Whatever" was a choice, not a dismissive aside!

Nanophysics of the '90s disclosed that material substance was virtual. All is energy in motion. We managed information. Business focused on visions and values, health on preventive medicine, cultures on roots. Our crisis was a *search for meaning*. "What's worthwhile?" was our quest as we lined up to the latest in spirit care; escapees pursued the mystical as a New Age searched for human authenticity. We clamored for Marianas Trench depth and profundity. Some relied on slick operative Casino Jack Abramoff.

By JAIME VERGARA
Special to the Saipan TribuneVergara is a regular contributor to the
Saipan Tribune's Opinion Section

The century/millennial turn saw the collapse of taken-for-granted social and mental structures. The arrogant self-confidence of manifest destiny took a lump in 9/11; it confirmed what we had long ago suspected, that "Hi, Joe" was not always a friendly salutation outside of the contiguous 48. The disdain came home to roost. Effective economic, political and cultural institutions that once assured us of stability and predictability no longer worked. Detroit became a ghost town, and New York headed for Tom Delay and Ken Lay's sunny southwest. Washington could not deny away ecology's vulnerability. We encountered a terrifying crisis of *security*. We trusted no one. Bernard Madoff gave us ample reason. Preparedness to do battle with anyone became our *modus operandi*. Armageddon informed a belligerent White House and Homeland Security peeked at the color of our underwear. New myths abound and *Harry Potter* and the *Lord of the Rings* show heroism in the face of terrifying insecurity and danger.

Economic growth continued with profligate defense spending from China's funds, an unsustainable reality. We launched into the decade of Hope in spite of a global recession. Sustainability of life on planet *Eaarth* remains a primary contradiction. Technology intensifies; 90 percent of tomorrow's jobs remain to be created. Massive mental displacement is afoot. Smart phones are already replacing plastics, cellphones, and iPod/iPads. Our young pay their dollar for an hour in the game rooms to fight the enemy in their virtual realities shaping their imaginations. Our new addictions are the gizmos at Mega Byte and PC outlet. With energy generation, biotechnology, robotics, and AI, tech is in rapid growth. *Time* chose Facebook founder as the "Person of the Year" for 2010. We continue the illusory path of limitless growth.

The original greeting for this season was not "Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year." It was: "Fear not." In the face of an overwhelming unknown, we do tend to cower in fear and are ingenious in devising escapes.

This is the season of reminding us of the incredible preponderance, if one might be forgiven the language of Paul of Tarsus, of grace over sin. "Sin abounds, but grace abounds much more." Growth may no longer be an option, but taking a leaf from the pages of history, a leap of faith is. Let it be for us this coming year. Be not afraid!

EDITORIAL POLICY

The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, Century Insurance Building, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

The Tao of Shawshank

Lessons for living in 2011 and beyond

Tao is a Chinese word which, loosely translated, means "way." The letter "t" is an approximation of a Chinese sound that does not have an exact English equivalent. The most accurate rendition would be a combination "t" & "d" sound, as in "Tdhow." Many pronounce it "Dow", as in "Dow Jones" (ie., to rhyme with "how" or "now"). I give you, therefore, The Way of Shawshank

One of my favorite movies of all time is *The Shawshank Redemption* starring Tim Robbins and Morgan Freeman. Robbins plays Andy Dufresne, a man wrongfully imprisoned. Freeman plays a fellow inmate who becomes his friend and confidante.

While others cite the themes of *transformation* as well as "*maintaining integrity in places and situations where integrity is lacking*" as the movie's primary messages, I imagine that the movie's instant appeal to me was due to what I recognized and connected with as the themes of escape and freedom—concepts that figure prominently in my own world view.

With no intention to trivialize the stark reality and profound experience that one goes through when one is actually physically incarcerated, I submit to you that many of life's situations can be likened to being confined, restricted, caged or otherwise imprisoned.

When I was employed in the corporate world, I felt as if I was in a sort of prison, as if a part of me was dying each day I showed up for work. I felt trapped. Caged.

I hate to give away the plot of a movie out of respect of those who have not yet seen it, but *The Shawshank Redemption* is a perfect metaphor for life. The movie offers the perfect blueprint for what 90 percent of us in the world should know, should do, and should become in order to survive, thrive, prosper, and be free. Watch it (again) so you can fully appreciate the Way of Shawshank and the following lessons one can glean when faced with a situation (career, relationship, etc.) in which one feels trapped, stuck or otherwise restricted:

1. Sometimes life and its circumstances can feel like a prison.
2. Even the innocent can be imprisoned.
3. Knowing the truth about who you really are (your guilt or innocence), or about the world around you, is sometimes not enough to set you free. Sometimes justice comes only to those who help themselves.
4. Plan your escape. Keep it a secret while you work on it, for even your good friends may dissuade you from having and acting on your hope.
5. Sometimes it's necessary to construct a fantasy or a facade that others see, to hide your true intentions. But just behind it, on the other side of your fantasy, behind the passion that others see, often lies your path to escape.
6. One of the best ways to maintain your sanity while trapped is to find what you're good at (a passion) and do it, even if it benefits those who are your jailers, but never, ever lose sight of your ultimate goal. Sometimes it's necessary to work within and support a flawed or evil system in the process of masterminding your eventual escape

After 32 years of US citizenship

Let's close out the year by reviewing the barometer of events to survey our progress in terms of our understanding of various issues before us. Specifically, let's probe how well do we understand the rights of citizens and whether we've honored those rights.

It isn't surprising, though, that some of us declare a belief in "equality" while perversely promoting the adolescent view that the indigenous people have "special" rights in terms of landownership. The latter reflects that we haven't come to grips with the first principles upon which "We the people..." was founded some 236 years ago. In short, we believe in the virtues of equality, but prefer sticking to the abstract when tasked to meet such responsibilities head on. Definitely, we have been derelict on this and other collateral issues.

Advocates of "special rights" have alluded to the UN Charter on Indigenous Rights as protecting indigenous rights on land alienation. But what they didn't point out is the declaration under the same charter that says, "there shall be no discrimination against any group(s) of people" especially in U.S. jurisdictions. You have every right to promote your agenda, but spare us the half-truths, please.

Such misinformation has resulted in the misconception of "special rights." It has wedged a sharp division amongst our people on landownership. It has also given birth to bigotry and the lame view that the indigenous people are incapable of making final disposition on their private land. But whose land is it anyway? Haven't our people been educated and sufficiently sophisticated to make educated disposition of their properties? Why promote bigoted views on Article XII?

Since five thousand years ago until 1978, the indigenous people have owned their sacred land and were free to dispose of it the way they see fit. Land alienation was a transitional provision known as

from it.

7. Some will attack you. Some will discredit you. Some will screw you over. You may have to put up with a lot of that...on a regular basis. Do not let it change you. Bide your time, and build your castles in your sleep. Endure.

8. Feel free to break the rules of confinement on occasion, as long as you're aware of, and prepared to suffer the consequences. Do not live in fear of punishment or retaliation.

9. Sometimes, it's necessary to accept that some people have been in prison for so long that they neither can nor want to function outside of its walls. Not everyone is seeking escape. Do not let this fact change YOU, or have you resign in your determination to be free. Use it to empower you to walk a different path. ("These walls are funny. First you hate em'... then you get used to em'... after a while you start to depend on them. That's what it means to be institutionalized."—Red (Morgan Freeman))

10. When the time is right...execute your escape. Take action. In executing your escape, you may have to go through even more dirt, filth, and "crap" to get to the other side. Bring a bar of soap.

11. Once on the other side, you can live the life you've always envisioned, and live true to your self.

12. If you want to double the fun, bring a friend and confidante along.

Therefore, for 2011

The underlying theme of my articles in 2011 include the ever-necessary, and ongoing three-step process exemplified in The Shawshank Way: 1. Reclaim your power. 2. Break Free. 3. Live True to Your Self. Remember that these steps are non-linear. They are not executed sequentially but as parallel processes. You are *always* reclaiming more and more of your power, you are *always* breaking free in different ways every day, and on many levels you are *always* improving your definition of what it means to live true to yourself.

How do you reclaim your power?

In order to reclaim your power, you must first know the truth that there is, in fact, power to be reclaimed. This power is the nature of your being. You were born with it. However, for most of us, it is being suppressed. Others know this.

What power am I referring to? I'm speaking about the power to create—the power to envision a specific reality and then to make that reality come true. That power can be applied to your career, to your social life, to your financial situation, and your overall prosperity. You have the power to envision something other than what you are currently experiencing, and then to take steps to move towards that vision. A new, more rewarding career? More money? Fulfilling relationship? A different lifestyle? Purpose? Passion? Profit? It's all within your power. If you do not believe this, then someone has lied to you.

It's said that knowledge is power. The second step to reclaiming your power is knowing what else you are being deceived about. As each layer of deception is exposed, your power increases.

Article XII. It was intended to prevent the massive loss of land during the formative years of our constitutional government. There was legitimate fear then of land being gobbled up by U.S. corporations. This never occurred but the intent of land alienation was there to prevent it as a matter of transitional protection.

Now, the sacred document of "We the people..." addresses the right to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" as constitutional rights of every U.S. citizen. One of the derivatives is the right to own property or land. The landowner works to make productive use of his land. He benefits directly from the use of his property. No one has the right to interfere or violate his rights to enjoy the fruits of his labor. Would you allow others to dictate disposition of your private land? It's your land therefore you are the final arbiter of its disposition from A-Z. Remember, a right can never be violated nor infringed upon.

Others have used Guam, Hawaii, and American Samoa as examples where the indigenous people lost their sacred land. Take a closer scrutiny at the history of their land versus the NMI. In our case, there was the compensation of land via the Micronesian war claims, the return of public land in 1977 and subsequent land compensation and exchange from acquisition of private land for public purposes in recent past. In short, no indigenous land was taken without due process.

I suppose it's difficult getting rid of old habits, you know, the days of the TTG when we can literally discriminate against anyone, especially foreigners. But let's refocus and concentrate on the time-honored resiliency and resolve to unite under the cultural tradition of deference to harmony to improve the lot of our people.

Our children's dreams and aspirations serve as our inspiration to act with resolve and responsibility to move forward, all the while doing what is right. Focusing on doing what's right is the only

The Saipanpreneur Project

Creating economic success for the CNMI

By WALT F.J. GOODRIDGE

Special to the Saipan Tribune

Send article suggestions, entrepreneur nominations and feedback about this article to walt@passionprofit.com.



How do you break free?

In order to break free, you must take action. Once you know that there is another way to be, another reality "on the outside," you can then break free from the cage you are now living in. You must take "risks." However, armed with the awareness of the power you have reclaimed, you will no longer see these actions as the risky actions they once appeared. They will be the only course of action that makes sense.

Finally, how do you live true to your self?

The answer to that question will be different for each person. Everyone seeks a unique payoff; everyone seeks a unique experience of living, a unique experience of truth, and unique experience of the self.

However, if you are not currently living the life you wish to live, then I suggest that you must first (re)define living. Then, as indicated above, (re)define truth. Then (re)define the self if you are to arrive at a workable understanding of what it means to you.

According to Wallace Wattles (The Science of Getting Rich): "*You must want real life, not mere pleasure or sensual gratification. Life is the performance of function, and the individual really lives only when he performs every function—physical, mental, and spiritual—of which he is capable, without excess in any.*"

One Day I'll Fly away

"I have to remind myself that some birds aren't meant to be caged. Their feathers are just too bright. And when they fly away, the part of you that knows it was a sin to lock them up does rejoice. But still, the place you live in is that much more drab and empty that they're gone."

Those words from the movie echo what Morgan Freeman's character felt in his heart toward the end of the movie. Yes, your decision to empower, escape and live true to yourself may remove you from the day-to-day experience and reality of those whom you may have to leave behind. However, perhaps too, like Andy Dufresne, your escape will offer a path that others may choose to follow to find their own happiness! You owe it to yourself and to them to lead the way. I'll see you on the outside!

Walt F.J. Goodridge is author of 16 books including Turn Your Passion Into Profit. Walt offers coaching and workshops to help people pursue and profit from their passions. Originally from the island of Jamaica, Walt has grown several successful businesses in the US, and now lives a nomadpreneur lifestyle. To learn more, visit www.passionprofit.com.

By JOHN S. DELROSARIO JR.

Special to the Saipan Tribune

Delrosario is a regular contributor to the Saipan Tribune's Opinion Section



salvation to begin strengthening our democratic institutions. This journey entails a long march, a tiring march that requires courage and resiliency. No longer can we enslave ourselves from purposeful abandonment of the rights of *all* U.S. citizens. We can no longer live in self-denial either.

■ ■ ■ ■

We can talk interminably about self-government by mouthing off what we see as inadequacies premised on our lack of understanding of the Covenant agreement. It isn't surprising too that we often mix our misperception of sovereignty with half-cocked understanding of self-government. And we brave disoriented assertions on everything we perceive as "wrong" in what has become a dysfunctional U.S.-CNMI relationship.

The seeming difficulty reminds me of a young kid who asked the blind wise man of the village if the bird in his hand is dead or alive. He was ready to surprise the old man depending on his answer. After a while, the wise man said, "Son, the bird is in the palm of your hands." What's the moral of the story? Only we can decide our future. The bird is in the palm of our hands!

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

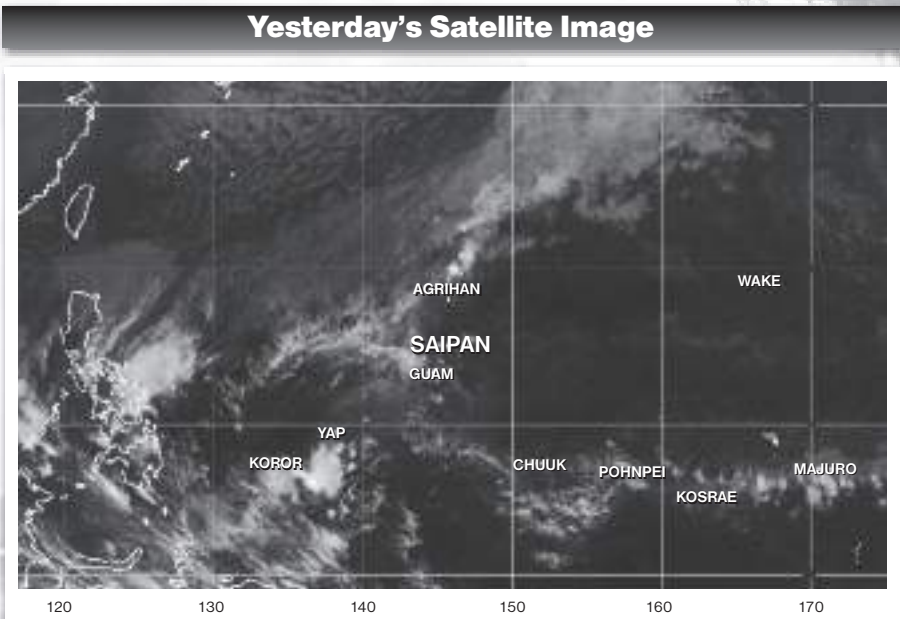
5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°

Micronesia		
Guam and Rota	Mostly Sunny	▲86 ▼79
Palau	Thunderstorms	▲85 ▼77
Yap	Showers	▲87 ▼77
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	▲85 ▼79
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	▲87 ▼76
Kosrae	Showers	▲86 ▼77
Majuro	Rain	▲83 ▼75

Around The Globe		
Auckland	Showers	▲73 ▼65
Beijing	Windy	▲27 ▼13
Hong Kong	Sunny	▲65 ▼41
Honolulu	Showers	▲78 ▼70
London	Cloudy	▲45 ▼40
Los Angeles	Rain	▲57 ▼42
Manila	Thundershowers	▲83 ▼73
Melbourne	Mostly Sunny	▲75 ▼56
Miami	Sunny	▲71 ▼57
New York	Sunny	▲37 ▼24
Osaka	Showers	▲45 ▼35
Paris	Partly Cloudy	▲40 ▼34
Pusan	Showers	▲41 ▼26
Rome	Showers	▲41 ▼26
Salem	Showers	▲42 ▼36
San Francisco	Windy	▲55 ▼44
Seoul	Snow	▲27 ▼14
Tokyo	Showers	▲51 ▼37
Washington, DC	Sunny	▲41 ▼32

Tides			
Saipan Harbor			
2:01 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.4 Feet
7:31 AM	Today	Low Tide:	0.7 Feet
1:53 PM	Today	High Tide:	2.0 Feet
9:17 PM	Today	Low Tide:	0.2 Feet



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, MONDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2010
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A cold front extends southwestward from 25N157E to 21N150E then continues as a shear line to beyond 130E at 13N. Cloudiness and scattered showers are found along and up to 300 miles northwest of this boundary. A surface trough heads northeastward from 11N144E to 18N148E. Scattered showers are present over Guam and Saipan within an area bounded by a line from 17N151E to 17N145E to 13N143E to 13N145E back to 17N151E. A near-equatorial trough runs southeastward from 2N130E to end at EQ136E. Scattered showers and a few thunderstorms are occurring near Koror and Yap within 150 miles of a line from 3N131E to 10N136E. A second surface trough reaches northeastward from 3N143E to 9N153E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are taking place just west of Chuuk within 150 miles of the trough axis. A third surface trough curves eastward from near Pohnpei at 6N158E across the Marshalls to beyond 180 at 9N. Scattered showers are located within 150 miles of the trough axis over Pohnpei, Kwajalein and Majuro.

Sunrise/Sunset			Moonrise/Moonset		
Today	6:42 AM	5:56 PM	Today	12:38 AM	12:37 PM
Thursday	6:42 AM	5:56 PM	Thursday	1:35 AM	1:23 PM
Friday	6:43 AM	5:57 PM	Friday	2:34 AM	2:13 PM
Saturday	6:43 AM	5:58 PM	Saturday	3:33 AM	3:05 PM
Sunday	6:43 AM	5:58 PM	Sunday	3:33 AM	3:05 PM

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A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMUT SARI
Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

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Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.

- CAMPUS BULLETIN
Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

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- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 16, 2010									
DEPARTURES					ARRIVALS				
SAIPAN-GUAM					GUAM-SAIPAN				
C09317	4:25am	5:15am	Daily		C09316	2:45am	3:35am	Daily	
C09313	7:55am	8:45am	3, 6		C09596	6:35am	7:25am	3, 6	
C09313	8:30am	9:20am	1, 2, 4, 5, 7		C09596	7:00am	7:50am	1, 2, 4, 5, 7	
C09601	12:10pm	1:00pm	1, 4, 5, 7		C09600	10:05am	10:55am	1, 2, 4, 5, 7	
C09603	3:05pm	3:55pm	1, 2, 4, 5, 7		C09602	1:40pm	2:30pm	1, 4, 5, 7	
C09605	6:20pm	7:10pm	Daily		C09604	5:00pm	5:50pm	Daily	
C09599	9:30pm	10:20pm	Daily		C09606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily	
SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)					NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN				
DL287	6:10am	8:45am	Daily		DL298	10:25am	3:05pm	Daily	
DL285	6:40am	9:15am	1, 3, 4, 5, 6		DL286	7:45pm	12:20am+1	2, 3, 4, 5, 7	
DL297	4:35pm	7:15pm	Daily		DL288	8:00pm	12:30am+1	Daily	
SAIPAN-OSAKA (KIX)					OSAKA (KIX)-SAIPAN				
OZ119	4:00am	6:40am	Daily		OZ120	9:50am	2:20am+1	Daily	
SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)					BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN				
OZ608	3:20am	6:50am	1, 4, 5, 7		OZ607	9:10pm	2:20am+1	3, 4, 6, 7	
SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)					SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN				
OZ606	2:10am	6:00am	1		OZ603	9:00am	2:20pm	2, 4, 6, 7	
OZ606	2:40am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7		OZ120	7:10pm	2:20am+1	Daily via KIX	
OZ604	3:20pm	7:00pm	2, 4, 6, 7		OZ605	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7	
OZ119	4:00am	11:25am	Daily via KIX		OZ605	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	
SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)					SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN				
FM844	2:50am	5:40am	2, 6		FM843	7:15pm	1:50am+1	1, 5	
SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)					BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN				
CA988	3:15am	6:55am	1, 5 Dec 13, 17, 20, 24 & 27 only		CA987	6:40pm	1:55am+1	4, 7 Dec 12, 16, 19, 23 & 26 only	
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)					MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN				
OZ606/701	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN		OZ704/603	12:10am	2:20pm	2, 4, 6, 7 via ICN	
OZ606/701	2:40am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN		OZ716/603	12:30am	2:20pm	4, 6 via ICN	
C09317/891	4:25am	9:45am	3, 6 via GUM		DL172/286	8:05am	12:20am+1	2, 3, 4, 5, 7	
DL285/173	6:40am	10:15pm	1, 3, 4, 5, 6 via NRT		C0890/9606	10:55am	8:50pm	3, 6 via GUM	
C09313/933	7:55am	9:25pm	3 via GUM		OZ702/605	1:10pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN	
C09313/893	7:55am	11:00pm	3 via GUM-Palau		OZ702/605	1:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN	
C09603/933	3:05pm	9:25pm	5 via GUM		PR110/C09596	10:15pm	7:25am+1	6 via GUM	
C09603/893	3:05pm	11:00pm	5 via GUM-Palau		PR110/C09596	10:15pm	7:50am+1	1, 2, 4, 7 via GUM	
OZ604/703	3:20pm	11:00pm	2, 4, 6, 7 ICN		C0892/9596	10:25pm	7:25am+1	3 via GUM-Palau	
OZ604/715	3:20pm	11:30pm	7		C0892/9596	10:25pm	7:50am+1	5 via GUM-Palau	
C09605/933	6:20pm	9:40pm	1, 2, 4, 6, 7 via GUM		C0934/9596	11:10pm	7:50am+1	1, 2, 7 via GUM	
C09599/PR111	9:30pm	7:50am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM		C0934/9596	11:25pm	7:50am+1	4 via GUM	
					C0934/9596	11:59pm	7:25am+1	3 via GUM	
					C0934/9596	11:59pm	7:50am+1	5 via GUM	
SAIPAN-HONG KONG					HONG KONG-SAIPAN				
OZ606/721	2:10am	12:00pm	1 via ICN		OZ724/603	12:30am	2:20pm	2, 4, 6, 7 via ICN	
OZ606/721	2:40am	12:00pm	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN		OZ750/603	1:00am	2:20pm	2, 4, 6, 7 via ICN	
C09603/909	3:05pm	10:25pm	1, 5 via GUM		OZ722/605	1:30pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN	
OZ604/723	3:20pm	10:35pm	2, 4, 6, 7 via ICN		OZ722/605	1:30pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN	
OZ604/749	3:20pm	11:00pm	2, 4, 6, 7 via ICN		C0910/9596	11:15pm	7:50am+1	1, 5 via GUM	
Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CZ: China Southern; CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana; CA: Air China ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The <i>Saipan Tribune</i> is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)									

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE													
Airline				ETD	ETA	Frequency	Airline				ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota							FRE 113	11:40	11:50	Daily			
FRE 100	7:30	8:00	Daily				FRE 115	13:00	13:10	Daily			
Rota-Saipan							FRE 117	14:30	14:40	Daily			
FRE 100	8:20	8:50	Daily				FRE 119	16:00	16:10	Daily			
Guam-Rota							FRE 121	16:40	16:50	Daily			
FRE 300	17:00	17:30	Daily				FRE 123	17:40	17:50	Daily			
Rota-Saipan	17:50	18:20	Daily				FRE 125	18:30	18:40	Daily			
Saipan-Rota							Tinian-Saipan						
FRE 200	9:30	10:00	Daily				FRE 102	7:05	7:15	Daily			
Rota-Guam	10:20	10:45	Daily				FRE 104	7:50	8:00	Daily			
Saipan-Rota							FRE 106	8:20	8:30	Daily			
FRE 400	18:55	19:25	Daily				FRE 108	9:00	9:10	Daily			
Rota-Guam							FRE 110	10:00	10:10	Daily			
FRE 400	19:40	20:10	Daily				FRE 112	11:05	11:15	Daily			
Saipan-Tinian							FRE 114	12:00	12:10	Daily			
FRE 101	6:45	6:55	Daily				FRE 116	13:30	13:40	Daily			
FRE 103	7:30	7:40	Daily				FRE 118	14:50	15:00	Daily			
FRE 105	8:00	8:10	Daily				FRE 120	16:20	16:30	Daily			
FRE 107	8:40	8:50	Daily				FRE 122	17:00	17:10	Daily			
FRE 109	9:10	9:20	Daily				FRE 124	18:05	18:15	Daily			
FRE 111	10:45	10:55	Daily				FRE 126	18:50	19:00	Daily			



NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

Business

Thousands stranded by 2-foot blizzard in Northeast

NEW YORK (AP)—Thousands of travelers trying to get home after the holiday weekend sat bored and bleary-eyed in airports and shivered aboard stuck buses and subway trains Monday, stranded by a blizzard that slammed the Northeast with more than 2 feet of snow.

"People are exhausted. They want to get home," sighed Eric Schorr, marooned at New York's Kennedy Airport since Sunday afternoon by the storm, which worked its way up the coast from the Carolinas to Maine with winds up to 80 mph that whirled the snow into deep drifts across streets, railroad tracks and runways.

Snowfall totals included a foot in Tidewater, Va., and Philadelphia, 29 inches in parts of northern New Jersey, 2 feet north of New York City, and more than 18 inches in Boston.

The storm closed all three of the New York metropolitan area's airports Sunday and stymied most other means of transportation. Buses sputtered to a halt in snow drifts. Trains stopped in their tracks. Taxi drivers abandoned their cabs in the middle of New York's snow-clogged streets. Even the New York City subway system—usually dependable during a snowstorm—broke down in spots, trapping riders for hours.

By Monday evening, planes had begun landing at Kennedy and LaGuardia airports. Flights were expected to begin arriving at the airport in Newark, N.J., later in the night.

A Royal Jordanian flight touched down shortly before 7 p.m. at Kennedy, the first to arrive since the blizzard hit, said



Air travelers wait in line to find out the status of their flights at John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York, Monday, Dec. 27, 2010.

Steve Coleman, of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, which operates the airports.

Just before an Air Canada flight from Toronto touched down at LaGuardia about 40 minutes later, the captain came over the loudspeaker and informed passengers that it was the first flight to land at the airport since the blizzard hit.

"Everyone was clapping toward the end," said Patrick Wacker, 37, who had been stranded in Toronto for a day while trying to get back to New York after visiting his parents in Frankfurt, Germany.

Wacker and other deplaning passengers said there was some turbulence on landing and the plane had to be towed to the gate because it couldn't get through

the snow on the runway.

Cold, hungry and tired passengers spent Sunday night in airports, train stations and bus depots. Some were given cots and blankets. Others used their luggage as pillows, curled into chairs, or made beds by spreading towels on the floor or overturning the plastic bins used for sending items through airport security.

Some airline passengers could be stuck for days. Many planes are booked solid because of the busy holiday season, and airlines are operating fewer flights because of the economic downturn.

As bad as the storm was, it could have been worse if it had been an ordinary work day. Children are home from school all week on Christmas vacation,

and lots of people had taken off from work.

Many youngsters went out and frolicked in the snow, some of them using the sleds they got for Christmas.

Many side streets in New York City remained unplowed well into the day, and pedestrians stumbled over drifts and trudged through knee-deep snow in some places. Numerous people simply gave up trying to use the sidewalks, instead walking down the middle of partially plowed streets. Some New Yorkers complained that snowplow crews were neglecting neighborhoods in the outer boroughs in favor of Manhattan.

A testy Mayor Michael Bloomberg defended the city's cleanup effort, saying the furious pace of the snowfall—2

to 3 inches per hour—required crews to plow streets repeatedly to keep them open. And abandoned cars slowed the process further because plows could not get through, he said.

"It's being handled by the best professionals in the business," Bloomberg said, urging people not to get upset. "It's a snowstorm, and it really is inconvenient for a lot of people."

At the Manchester Boston Regional Airport outside Manchester, N.H., 25-year-old Alicia Kinney slept overnight on benches in the baggage claim area before moving to the food court for a soda in the morning.

"I'm trying to stay positive," she said.

The blizzard had a ripple ef-

fect on air travel, stranding thousands of people at airports around the country.

"I know the Northeast was hit by snow. I get it. But still, this is Monday and I still haven't gotten a flight yet," said Sam Rogers, who had planned to fly back to New York on Sunday after visiting his brother in Charlotte, N.C., for the holiday. He was supposed to be back Monday at the mortgage company where he works, but no one was answering the phone at his office. "I guess they took a snow day, too."

In New York, many passengers tired of waiting around couldn't have left even if they wanted to. Taxis were hard to find, and many airport shuttles and trains were also a lost cause.

BoH named America's best bank for 2nd straight year

HONOLULU, HAWAII—For the second year in a row, *Forbes Magazine* has named Bank of Hawaii the nation's best bank among the 100 largest banks and thrifts. (The rankings were published in its Dec. 20 online edition.)

Peter Ho, Bank of Hawaii chairman and chief executive officer, said, "Attaining this ranking for two consecutive years now certainly reflects positively on the quality of our community, our clients, and especially our people. This is a nice tribute to our employees, who work tirelessly to meet our customers' financial needs."

To determine the ranking, *Forbes* partnered with SNL Financial and evaluated U.S.-

owned banks and thrift institutions ranging in asset size from \$4.7 billion (Independent Bank) to \$2.3 trillion (Bank of America). Bank of Hawaii has assets of \$12.7 billion.

The *Forbes*/SNL ranking was based on eight different financial performance measures, which included:

- return on average equity;
- net interest margin;
- non-performing loans as a percentage of loans;
- non-performing assets as percentage of assets;
- reserves as a percentage of non-performing loans;
- two capital ratios (Tier 1 and risk-based), and
- leverage ratio. (PR)

Holidays and other matters

Question: My friend's company gives her paid holidays. Mine doesn't. Isn't there a law or something about that? It doesn't seem fair.

The short answer to that is—no there isn't. The Fair Labor Standards Act does not mandate a company to give its employees holidays, whether paid or unpaid. Some states might have special laws, but the CNMI only has a law that covers government employees, providing 14 paid holidays, 13 of which are now unpaid, based on the 2011 appropriations act. The CNMI, however, does not have a law requiring holidays for private businesses. Also, the Department of Labor contract for nonresident workers does not include any provision for holidays. Each employer determines its holiday benefit individually and usually establishes the benefit in its policies, handbook, or contracts. Companies

that I am aware of provide from 11 holidays down to none.

Additionally, there is no law or DOL contract provision requiring either annual leave or sick leave benefits. These also are provided at the discretion of each company.

As far as being fair, there is no issue of fairness between different companies. Fairness, in the context of discrimination, could be an internal issue with a company's holiday and leave benefits. If holiday or leave benefits are provided, they should be consistent within parameters established by policy. In most cases, companies that provide a holiday benefit usually give all employees the same holiday, whether paid or unpaid. Annual leave and sick leave benefits, however, are often different, based upon either level of position within a company (executive, management, or non-management employees). Sometimes the amount of an-

nual leave or sick leave provided is differentiated, based upon length of employment within a company. Any differentiation could be based upon such factors as these examples that a company has established by policy, being careful that any difference in benefit is not based upon any of the factors that could trigger a claim of discrimination, such as race, color, religion, sex, national origin or other factor covered by law.

Q: Both Christmas day and New Year's fall on Saturday this year. What do we have to do for those who work on Saturday? What about those who don't work on the holiday?

This is another question that has come up several times recently regarding the holidays. The answer actually returns to ques-

tion one above. What a company does on holidays, Saturday or otherwise, depends upon the holiday policy the company has established. Companies that give either unpaid holidays or no paid holidays would treat a holiday like any other day. If an employee is off on the holiday, no payment is required, if the employee is required to work on the holiday, the employee would be paid only his or her regular rate of pay, plus any overtime worked.

However, if the company's policies, handbook or contract provides for Christmas and/or New Year's as paid holidays, the employee who worked on the holiday would be paid regular pay for working and a holiday premium, which is normally an additional amount equal to the regular rate of pay. If there is no provision in the policy, handbook or contract that says otherwise, then an employee who has a paid holiday benefit and

HR MATTERS

By FRANK GIBSON
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Frank L. Gibson, SPHR, GPHR, owner of HR Support, CNMI, has been a resident of the CNMI for more than 14 years. One of the founding members of the CNMI Chapter of the Society for Human Resource Management, he has worked both as a line-manager of human resources and in the Human Resource Office.



the holiday occurred on the employee's day off, the employee should be given an alternative day off. In most cases, the Friday before or the Monday after the holiday is usually designated as an alternate holiday and the employee is given the day off with pay. The day off could be scheduled on another day more convenient for the company as it is a company benefit not regulated by any law.

I guess the company could not pay anything additional to

those who didn't work, but that might not be fair as some did receive the holiday pay.

Happy holidays!

The information contained in this column is intended as general information only. Readers should obtain professional advice before taking action with respect to their individual situations. Readers may submit questions regarding human resource issues to hrsupportcnmi@gmail.com or editor@saipantribune.com.

Nation

Baby boomers near 65 with retirements in jeopardy

CHICAGO (AP)—Through a combination of procrastination and bad timing, many baby boomers are facing a personal finance disaster just as they're hoping to retire. Starting in January, more than 10,000 baby boomers a day will turn 65, a pattern that will continue for the next 19 years.

The boomers, who in their youth revolutionized everything from music to race relations, are set to redefine retirement. But a generation that made its mark in the tumultuous 1960s now faces a crisis as it hits its own mid-60s.

"The situation is extremely serious because baby boomers have not saved very effectively for retirement and are still retiring too early," says Olivia Mitchell, director of the Boettner Center for Pensions and Retirement Research at the University of Pennsylvania.

There are several reasons to be concerned:

- The traditional pension plan is disappearing. In 1980, some 39 percent of private-sector workers had a pension that guaranteed a steady payout during retirement. Today that number stands closer to 15 percent, according to the Employee Benefit Research Institute in Washington, D.C.

- Reliance on stocks in retirement plans is greater than ever; 42 percent of those



In this photo taken Wednesday, Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2010, Mike Vanatta stands in his Vero Beach, Fla. living room, with his toys, talking about his life. AP

workers now have 401(k)s. But the past decade has been a lost one for stocks, with the Standard & Poor's 500 index posting total returns of just 4 percent since the beginning of 2000.

- Many retirees banked on their homes as their retirement fund. But the crash in housing prices has slashed almost a third of a typical home's value.

Now 22 percent of homeowners, or nearly 11 million people, owe more on their mortgage than their home is worth. Many are boomers.

Michael Vanatta, 61, of Vero Beach, Fla., is paying the price for being a boomer who enjoyed life without saving for the future. He put a daughter through college, but he also spent plenty of money on in-

dulgences like dining out and the latest electronic gadgets.

Vanatta was laid off last January from his \$100,000-a-year job as a sales executive for a turf company. And with savings of just \$5,000, he's on a budget for the first time. In April, he will start taking Social Security at age 62.

"If I'd been smarter and planned and had the bucks,

2006 health law he enacted as Massachusetts governor.

Romney took pains to say his plan was different from Obama's, mainly because it takes a state-by-state approach rather than a federal one-size-fits-all solution. Pawlenty aides note that the Minnesota governor rejected such mandates in his state.

But Pawlenty had his own problems this month. In a Wall Street Journal column, he said most labor union members now work for governments, which Obama has rendered "the only booming industry left in our economy." Since January 2008, he wrote, "the private sector has lost nearly 8 million jobs while local, state and federal governments added 590,000."

GOP hopefuls find some issues a hazard early on

WASHINGTON (AP)—This month's early, under-the-radar campaigning by potential Republican challengers to President Barack Obama is a reminder of something too easily forgotten: Running for president is harder than it looks, and Obama ultimately will stand against a flesh-and-blood nominee certain to make mistakes along the way.

Mitt Romney, Tim Pawlenty and other possible GOP candidates stumbled over health care, taxes and other issues in December, even as Obama coped with the harsh political reality stemming from his party's "shellacking" in last month's elections.

No serious contender has officially launched a 2012 cam-

paign. But with the Iowa caucuses less than 13 months away, at least a dozen Republicans are jockeying for position, speaking to groups throughout the country, writing op-ed columns and taking potshots at one another.

As all politicians learn, the more deeply they delve into contested issues, the likelier they are to stumble.

Sen. John Thune, R-S.D., got caught in the middle of his party's quickly changing views about congressional earmarks, the pet projects that some lawmakers sprinkle throughout big spending bills. Earlier this year he tucked more than \$100 million in earmarks into a massive year-end spending bill that many had expected to pass.

But after tea party successes in the Nov. 2 elections, elected Republicans swung hard against earmarks and pork-barrel spending. At a Dec. 15 news conference in the Capitol, Thune came uncomfortably close to echoing Sen. John Kerry's infamous line about voting for an \$87 billion bill "before I voted against it."

Thune told reporters: "I support those projects, but I don't support this bill, nor do I support the process by which this bill was put together."

Meanwhile, Romney was put on the spot when a federal judge ruled that Obama's health care law is unconstitutional because it requires everyone to buy health insurance. Romney included virtually the same mandate in the

Snowbound New Yorkers are upset about unplowed streets

NEW YORK (AP)—A windy winter storm that dumped nearly 2 feet of snow on New York City also whipped up criticism about how the city responded to it.

Some New Yorkers in the outer boroughs complained that the city took too long to plow their neighborhoods, ignoring them in favor of wealthier Manhattan areas.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg said the fast pace of snowfall—2 to 3 inches per hour at some periods overnight—and the amount of people who abandoned cars in the road delayed the progress of the plows.

"Those cars have to be towed before plowing can resume, which really slows things up," he said.

Officials said crews were concentrating on main roadways and warned that side streets might not be cleared until Tuesday.

For the record, the city deployed 1,600 plows for a snowstorm that delivered 20.9 inches in February, as measured in Central Park. For this latest

I'd wait until 70," says Vanatta, who is divorced and rents an apartment. "It's my fault. For years I was making plenty of money and spending plenty of money."

Vanatta is in the majority. Some 51 percent of early boomer households, headed by those ages 55 to 64, face a retirement with lower living standards, according to a 2009 study by the Center for Retirement Research at Boston College.

Too many boomers have ignored or underestimated the worsening outlook for their finances, says Jean Setzand, director of financial security for AARP, the group that represents Americans over age 50. By far the greatest shortcoming has been a failure to save. The personal savings rate—the amount of disposable income unspent—averaged close to 10 percent in the 1970s and '80s. By late 2007, the rate had sunk to negative 1 percent.

winter blast—which dropped 20 inches—1,700 plows, plus 365 salt spreaders that were converted into plows, were working on the streets.

Fire officials said the unplowed roads were slowing their responses to emergencies, and snowbound residents in Brooklyn and Queens said many streets, including main thoroughfares, were impossible to traverse, making it difficult to get to work.

At New Enrico's Car Service in Queens, all 90 taxis in the fleet were grounded—either trapped under snow drifts or stuck on impassable streets.

"I'm furious at Mayor Bloomberg, he's a rich man, so he doesn't care about the little people," said livery driver Julio Carpio, speaking in Spanish. "I have to work, why aren't people out there plowing? Why does the mayor always go on TV the night before to say, 'We're all set with a fleet of salt trucks,'? and then you never see a single truck. They always abandon Queens."



ACROSS THE NATION

Police: Man killed outside Utah temple had machete

SALT LAKE CITY (AP)—A gun-toting man fatally shot by police outside a Mormon Temple on Christmas Day also was carrying a machete, as well as a rifle, shotguns and multiple swords, police said Monday. West Jordan police said Daniel Pogue, 54, of South Jordan, was

chopping up the fence surrounding the building. They said he had tossed the other weapons over a wall that surrounded the Oquirrh Mountain Temple of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Mass. officer shot dead with suspect during holdup

WOBURN, Mass. (AP)—

Two men pleaded not guilty Monday to charges they were involved in the shooting death of a veteran police officer who responded to an armed robbery at a department store jewelry counter. One suspect was also killed. Officer John Maguire was one of several officers who responded to 911 calls about a robbery at Kohl's just before 9 p.m. Sunday in the midst of a

snowstorm. Maguire was chasing two suspects on foot when the gunfire began. Maguire and 57-year-old Dominic Cinelli, whom police identified as the man who fired the fatal shot, were both struck.

5 dead in Fla. motel carbon monoxide poisoning

HIALEAH, Fla. (AP)—Fire

officials say five friends are dead likely from carbon monoxide poisoning caused by a running car in a closed garage underneath their South Florida motel room. Hialeah police spokesman Carl Zogby says it is believed to be an accident. A Hialeah fire spokesman says a maid at Presidente Motel called 911 Monday after looking through a win-

dow and seeing several of the teens unconscious. Police say they had rented the room Sunday to celebrate one of teens' 19th birthday. A car that had needed a jump-start earlier was left running in the garage. A door leading to a staircase up to the room had been left open, and high levels of carbon monoxide were found inside.

Asia

Analysts: NKorean provocations to increase in 2011

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea could fire missiles at South Korea next year, analysts predicted Monday, as the isolated North's hostility toward the outside world deepens while it undergoes a hereditary transfer of power.

Tensions are high on the Korean peninsula following a series of provocations from the North this year. More recently, however, as South Korea responded angrily with threats of its own, Pyongyang has shown some restraint.

Expect the pendulum to swing back in the other direction in 2011, the Institute for National Security Strategy warned in a report published last week and posted to its website Monday.

The country could conduct a third nuclear bomb test and wage more attacks on front-line islands—like Yeonpyeong, which was bombarded in shelling that killed four South Koreans last month—the report said. North Korea may even fire missiles and more artillery at the those islands, chief researcher Lee In-ho told The Associated Press after the report was posted.

The Yeonpyeong attack came eight months after the deadly sinking of a South Korean warship blamed on a Pyongyang in which 46 sailors were killed.

North Korea accuses the South of triggering the assault on Yeonpyeong by carrying out military drills from the island, and denies involvement in the sinking of the Cheonan.

However, such hostility is of-



A tourist hangs on a ribbon with messages wishing for reunification of the two Koreas at a barded wire fence at the at the Imjingak Pavilion near the border village of Panmunjom in Paju, South Korea, Friday, Dec. 24, 2010.

ten used to drum up solidarity in the military at times of transition, and this year North Korea made the clearest sign yet that leader Kim Jong Il is grooming his third and youngest son—Kim Jong Un—as his successor. The 20-something was promoted to a four-star general and appointed to key ruling party posts in September to mark his formal political debut.

And the provocations are expected to become only more serious next year as North Korea pushes to cement the son's leadership and achieve its goal of building a "powerful, prosperous nation" in 2012, the 100th anniversary of North Korea founder Kim Il Sung's birth, said the report by the institute, which is affiliated with South Korea's main spy agency. The report was jointly written by about 20

institute researchers, but they say it does not represent their organization's official view.

Kim Jong Il, who himself inherited leadership upon his father's death in 1994, reportedly suffered a stroke in August 2008, intensifying speculation about what's next for the isolated yet nuclear-armed nation he rules with an iron fist.

Next year, the report said,

new provocations could also include shelling South Korean guard posts along their land border to attempts on the lives of North Korean defectors in the South. "A state of limbo in South-North Korea relations is

inevitable," the report said.

North Korea may also carry out a third atomic test to bolster its nuclear capability and ratchet up pressure on the U.S. to acquiesce to its calls for direct talks to gain aid and other concessions, researcher Lee said.

North Korea does not have diplomatic relations with the U.S., which supported the South during the 1950-53 Korean War and keeps more than 28,000 troops in South Korea to protect the ally against any aggression. The peninsula remains in a state of war because the conflict ended in a truce, not a peace treaty.

"North Korea aims to stoke tension by committing more provocations to force the U.S. to come to the negotiating table," Lee said. "If that doesn't work, the North may carry out a third nuclear test."

There are signs North Korea is preparing an atomic test at a northeastern detonation site, the report said, but didn't elaborate. Pyongyang also carried out underground nuclear tests in 2006 and in 2009, drawing widespread international condemnation and sanctions.

On Monday, South Korean President Lee Myung-bak promised relentless retaliation if provoked again, saying he was not afraid of war with the communist North.

Militias stem Pakistani Taliban, but at what cost?

MATANI, Pakistan (AP)—Tribal militias allied with the government helped block a Taliban advance in this corner of northwest Pakistan close to the Afghan border, but their success has come at a price: the empowerment of untrained, unaccountable private armies that could yet emerge as a threat of their own.

Tensions are emerging between authorities and the dozens of militias that they helped to create predominantly in and near the northwest tribal regions.

Operating from fortress-like compounds with anti-aircraft guns on the roofs, the militia-men have made it clear that the state now owes them for their sacrifices. They show photos on their cell phones of Taliban they killed and point to the scrubland outside, with graves of relatives who died in the fight.

The leader of the largest militia near the town of Matani, a wealthy landowner named Dilwar Khan, warns that he will stop cooperating with police unless he

gets more money and weapons from authorities. Speaking to The Associated Press, he adds what could be a veiled threat to join the militants.

"Time and time again, the Taliban have contacted us, urging us to change sides," he said.

Another local militia commander is locked in a dispute with local police, who recently raided his compound and accused him of stealing and overstepping his authority.

The experience in the Matani

area—12 miles (20 kilometers) from Peshawar, the largest city in Pakistan's northwest—shows the advantages of using proxies to counter al-Qaida and the Taliban, but also the pitfalls. In Iraq, similar forces were credited with creating a turning point in the war, when Sunni tribes rose up against al-Qaida and other Sunni insurgent groups. Many of those Iraqi Sunnis, however, now feel they are being marginalized by the Shiite leadership.

widely believed to secretly support the strikes and provide intelligence for at least some of them.

U.S. officials rarely discuss the covert, CIA-run missile program. Privately, however, they say it is a crucial tool and has killed several top militant leaders.

They also say the drone-fired strikes are very accurate and usually kill militants. Information from Pakistan's tribal belt is very hard to verify independently. Access to the area is legally restricted, and ongoing conflict there makes it dangerous territory.

US missiles hit Pakistan borderlands, killing 18

DERA ISMAIL KHAN, Pakistan (AP)—Suspected U.S. missiles struck two vehicles in a Taliban stronghold on Pakistan's side of the border with Afghanistan on Monday, killing 18 alleged militants, Pakistani intelligence officials said.

The attack in the North Waziristan tribal region came in the final days of a year that has witnessed an unprecedented number of such strikes from drone aircraft flying over Pakistani soil, part of a ramped-up U.S. campaign to take out al-Qaida and Taliban fighters seeking

sanctuary outside Afghanistan.

At least 110 such missile strikes have been launched this year—more than doubling last year's total. Nearly all have landed in North Waziristan, a region that hosts several militant groups battling U.S. and NATO troops in Afghanistan, including the feared Haqqani network.

The six missiles fired Monday struck the vehicles in the Shera Tala village of North Waziristan. Shera Tala lies in Mir Ali district, where militants are heavily concentrated. The identities of the 18 dead were not

immediately known.

The vehicles were apparently leaving a compound, and one was carrying a large load of ammunition, magnifying the blasts from the missile strikes, the intelligence officials said.

The three intelligence officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to media on the record.

Pakistan officially protests the strikes, saying they violate its sovereignty and anger tribesmen whose support it needs to fend off extremists. But Islamabad is

ASIAN BRIEFS

US man nabbed for drugs jumps to death in Manila

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Philippine and U.S. authorities are investigating the death of a U.S. Navy officer who police say jumped from a second-floor staircase at the Manila airport after being arrested with a sachet of cocaine. Aviation police chief Pedro Desuasido said Lt. Cmdr. Scintar Buenviaje Mejia leaped to his death Monday while he was being escorted to the bathroom by a security guard. Desuasido said the 35-year-old Mejia, a Filipino-American citizen, died of severe head injuries. He was arrested a day earlier at an airport X-ray machine where Desuasido said security personnel discovered a plastic sachet in the pocket of Mejia's bag containing cocaine. Desuasido said Mejia denied the sachet was his and claimed he was set up.

China's top blogger shuts down magazine

BEIJING (AP)—China's most popular blogger says he's shutting his freewheeling print magazine after just one issue because government officials appear to have blocked the printing of new editions. Han Han, a novelist and race car driver, has amassed millions

of regular readers with his sly online critiques of China's social problems and hoped to tap that audience with an arts and literature magazine, Party. He wrote in a blog post Tuesday that Party had closed because the publisher refused to print its second issue. He said government departments were behind the closure but it wasn't clear who had halted printing or why.

At least 21 dead in 2 China car accidents

BEIJING (AP)—At least 21 people, including 14 children, have died in a pair of traffic accidents in China, one a pileup of more than 100 cars in foggy weather. The official Xinhua News Agency says the 14 children died when the vehicle taking them to school Monday plunged into a creek in the central province of Hunan. Six others were injured. A Hengyang city government spokesman tells Xinhua the weather was very foggy at the time. In neighboring Guizhou province, Xinhua says seven people died and 15 were injured after a truck crashed into a gas station in fog Monday, causing a pileup involving more than 100 cars. Road accidents are common in China because of overloaded and unsafe vehicles, poor road conditions and bad driving habits.

World

Russian tycoon Khodorkovsky again found guilty

MOSCOW (AP)—To Russian prosecutors, imprisoned oil tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky is guilty of more crimes: They say he stole nearly \$30 billion in oil from his own company and laundered the proceeds. To others, he is a dissident who stood up to the powerful Vladimir Putin.

Whatever he is, Khodorkovsky, once the country's richest man, could be spending more time in jail. And many here point to one man: Putin.

Khodorkovsky's conviction on Monday of stealing from his company, Yukos, demonstrated that little has changed under Putin's successor, President Dmitry Medvedev, despite his promises to strengthen the rule of law and make courts an independent branch of government.

The verdict showed that Putin, now the prime minister, still holds great power. This month, he said, Khodorkovsky was a proven criminal who should sit in prison.

Hundreds of Khodorkovsky supporters rallied outside the courthouse, holding up signs saying "Freedom" and "Russia without Putin." Police roughly detained some of them as they chanted "Freedom" and "Down with Putin."

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton led a chorus of political figures in the United States and Europe in condemning the verdict.

It "raises serious questions about selective prosecution and about the rule of law being overshadowed by political considerations," she said.

Khodorkovsky is nearing the end of an eight-year sentence after being convicted of tax fraud in a case seen as punishment for challenging the Kremlin's economic and political power, in part by funding opposition parties in parliament.

Putin, who was president at the time and is seen as the driving force behind the latest trial, has not ruled out a return



Mikhail Khodorkovsky, center, and his co-defendant Platon Lebedev, right, are escorted to a court room in Moscow, Russia, Monday, Dec. 27, 2010.

to the presidency in 2012. He appears unwilling to risk the possibility that a freed Khodorkovsky could help unite and lead his political foes.

Being such an opposition leader would be a remarkable transformation for Khodorkovsky.

Once one of the reviled oligarchs who controlled much of Russia's economy and dictated their terms to the Kremlin, he has become a modern day political dissident and intellectual, a symbol of the struggle for democracy in Putin's Russia.

Like millions of political prisoners under Soviet dictator Josef Stalin, he spent time in a Siberian prison camp, where he was assigned to a workshop sewing shapeless gloves. Much of the past two years, he has been shuttling back and forth in handcuffs from a

Moscow jail to the stuffy courtroom he sat in on Monday.

His demeanor in court, however, and his ideas, expressed not only in testimony but in published essays and letters, have won him wide respect.

His hair, now gray, is cropped short and his complexion is pasty from lack of sun and exercise, but at 47 he appears strong.

It was clear from the opening pages of the verdict that the judge had found Khodorkovsky and his business partner Platon Lebedev guilty. Reading the full verdict and announcing the sentence was expected to take several days.

The conviction on charges of stealing nearly \$30 billion worth of the oil that Yukos produced from 1998 to 2003 and laundering the proceeds could keep him behind bars until at least 2017.

Prosecutors accused Khodorkovsky and Lebedev of taking the oil from Yukos' own production units and then selling it abroad at higher prices.

The defense called the charges ridiculous, arguing that prosecutors do not understand the oil business, including the payment of transit fees and export duties.

One of Khodorkovsky's lawyers, Vadim Klyuvgant, said Monday that if this logic were extended to the state oil and gas company Gazprom, the same charges could be brought against Medvedev.

"The court ruled that the difference between the oil price at the production site and at the market represents theft," Klyuvgant said. "Gazprom, where Medvedev served as board chairman, buys oil at the production site at a price 10 times lower than the market price in Rotterdam."



Former Russian oil tycoon

Mikhail Khodorkovsky

Early life

Born 1963, in Moscow

Education Studied at Mendelev Chemistry Institute

Wealthy entrepreneur

1987 Founds what would become Menatep, a private bank in post-Soviet Russia; begins making millions as bank acquires shares in companies that were privatized at low prices

1994 Buys Apatit, a fertilizer firm

1995 Buys failing oil company Yukos at state auction and turns it into Russia's second-largest oil company, soon seen by investors as one of Russia's best-run, most transparent companies; Forbes estimates his wealth at more than \$15 billion

Political downfall

Provides funding to political parties, including opposition to then-President Vladimir Putin; acquires an influential newspaper, hires an investigative journalist critical of Putin

2003 Detained by security forces

2005 Convicted of fraud and tax evasion; sentenced to eight years in prison

2006 Files for bankruptcy; Yukos assets sold at state auction

2010 Found guilty at second trial of stealing from Yukos, laundering the proceeds; supporters say the government wants him in prison because of his anti-Putin activities

Source: BBC, MCT Photo Service
Graphic: Pat Carr © 2010 MCT

WORLD BRIEFS

Twin suicide blasts kill 9 in western Iraq

BAGHDAD (AP)—Two suicide bombers blew themselves up Monday front of a government office in Iraq's western Anbar province, killing nine people including family members of security officials who were killed in another bombing at the same place less than a month ago, security officials said. Insurgents frequently go after Iraqi government targets in an effort to destabilize the U.S.-backed Iraqi authorities, as American troops prepare to leave by the end of next year. The Anbar provincial headquarters has been a particularly favorite target. It has been attacked four times in the span of a year, including an explosion in which the governor lost a leg.

2 mutilated bodies found in southern Mexico

ACAPULCO, Mexico (AP)—Police in the Mexican resort of Acapulco found the decapitated bodies of two men in front of a bar where 11 men were reportedly abducted earlier this month, officials said Monday. Shell casings from assault rifles and two handwritten messages whose contents

were not disclosed were found at the scene, according to a statement from police in the Pacific coast state of Guerrero where Acapulco is located. Such messages are often left by drug gangs. Eleven men were reported abducted from the bar on Dec. 17. Such establishments are frequently the targets of extortion attempts.

British court holds 9 on US Embassy terror plot

LONDON (AP)—Nine men suspected of plotting attacks on the U.S. Embassy and the London Stock Exchange were charged with terrorism-related crimes Monday and jailed until their next court appearance. A dozen men were arrested last week in London, Cardiff and Stoke-on-Trent in central England in the largest British anti-terror raid in two years. Three were released without charge. The arrests came at a time of heightened anxiety about terror plots in Europe. British officials have released few details, but U.S. State Department spokesman Mark Toner said the American Embassy in London was among the alleged plot's possible targets.

Ivoriens' reaction to strike highlights divisions

ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast (AP)—Ivoriens unevenly followed a general strike aimed at pressuring their incumbent leader Laurent Gbagbo to step down, largely sticking to the same fracture lines that marked the West African nation's civil war eight years ago.

Supporters of Alassane Ouattara, widely recognized as the winner of a Nov. 28 runoff vote against Gbagbo, called for the strike to begin Monday. It turned Bouake, the rebel capital, into a ghost town, but much of Abidjan, Ivory Coast's largest city, did not follow the strike and Gagnoa, a Gbagbo stronghold, was open for business.

The West African regional bloc ECOWAS has given Gbagbo an ultimatum to step aside, and suggested it would use force if necessary to oust him. Gbagbo has shown no hint that he is close to stepping down, however, and doubts exist about whether the bloc could carry out such a military operation.

Ouattara's camp remains confident that help is coming, and soon.

"It's not a bluff," one senior Ouattara adviser said on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter. "The soldiers are coming much faster than anyone thinks."

Dozens of people gathered outside the

Nigerian Embassy in Abidjan on Monday, holding signs that read: "We don't want a military intervention" and "Let Ivoriens solve Ivorian problems." Nigeria has the strongest army in the region and probably would play a major role if an operation were launched to oust Gbagbo.

"We think that the parties concerned should be able to reach whatever solutions they should arrive at amicably and without any foreign intervention," said protester Harry Osemegi.

Weeks of violence over the election have left at least 173 people dead, according to the U.N. The toll is believed to be much higher, as the U.N. said it has been unable to investigate reports of a mass grave because of restrictions on U.N. personnel movements.

Human rights groups have expressed alarm about hundreds of arrests, and dozens of cases of torture and disappearances since the vote that they blame on security forces associated with Gbagbo. Gbagbo supporters say at least 36 of the victims were police or other security forces who were targeted by gunfire coming from protesters.

Dozens of women gathered in Abidjan to pray for peace Monday.

"We are in trouble and we don't know what to do. We are not politi-

cians; we have had sleepless nights. We are stressed that's why we have come here to cry to God," said Edith Esther, an Abidjan resident.

The U.N. declared that Ouattara won the election, but Gbagbo refuses to concede defeat and leave despite admonitions from the U.N., the United States, European Union and the African Union.

ECOWAS was sending a high-level delegation—the presidents of Sierra Leone, Cape Verde, Benin and ECOWAS—to Ivory Coast early Tuesday morning, said Ibrahim Ben Kargbo, Sierra Leone's information and communication minister.

If Gbagbo doesn't leave office, "the community would be left with no alternative but to take other measures, including the use of legitimate force, to achieve the goals of the Ivorian people," the regional bloc said late Friday.

U.S. State Department spokesman Mark Toner said the United States supports the presidents' mission and remains very concerned that Gbagbo has refused to cede power. "We continue to work with the international community in trying to bring about a peaceful resolution and urge President Gbagbo to recognize the will of the people and step down," he said.

Focus

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP)—Arnold Schwarzenegger landed in the governor's office after announcing his upstart bid on late night TV and railing against government spending during raucous campaign rallies—at one playing a spirited round of air guitar to the rock anthem “We’re Not Gonna Take It.”

Then the world's best known action star, Schwarzenegger conveyed an image of invincibility, persuading Californians that anything was possible if only they had the right mindset.

“I know how to sell something,” he said then.

As he would come to learn, selling a political idea is one thing. Delivering on it is quite another.

In high Hollywood style, Schwarzenegger made bold commitments to cut through Sacramento's dysfunctional political system and put the state on a path to prosperity. But his celebrity quickly ran aground on the shoals of bureaucracy, entrenched politics and something Schwarzenegger had never faced before—angry detractors who didn't hesitate to attack him publicly.

After initially deriding nurses as “special interests” whose “butts” he was always kicking, he was brought down to earth by the nurses union, teachers and other public employee groups, which staged protests and helped derail his “year of reform” agenda during a special election in 2005.

His outsize personality wasn't enough to see through many of his dreams and promises, especially once the recession hit in late 2007 and led to a steep decline in tax revenue.

The 63-year-old governor leaves office next month with a mixed record, winning praise for his precedent-setting environmental activism and criticism for his failure to tame the fiscal mess, as he promised when Californians recalled Gov. Gray Davis and installed him instead.

Optimism for the future abounded in the wake of the historic recall; even skeptics were willing to give Schwarzenegger a shot. He had unprecedented goodwill, a blazingly positive attitude and arrived as an outsider who said he would not be beholden to special interests.

“What the people want to hear is ... are you tough enough to go in there and provide leadership? That's what this is about, and I will be tough enough,” Schwarzenegger said during the campaign.

But on the job, he often didn't have the patience to get the changes he wanted. He regularly changed course on major initiatives when he encountered roadblocks. He backed down from his massive proposal to restructure government, the California Performance Review, even though it projected savings of \$32 billion over five years. Democrats howled, and the governor feared they might block his other efforts.

“I had very high hopes for him. Maybe it's a case of my expectations and people's expectations were too high in the first place,” said Lou Cannon, the author of five books about former President Ronald Reagan, who served two terms as California governor.

After besting an eclectic and improbable parade of 134 other candidates, including former child actor Gary Coleman and porn star Mary

In this Sept. 8, 2008 file photo, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger is greeted by children as he walks to a ceremony to honor several Olympic athletes from California, at the Capitol in Sacramento, Calif. AP



Schwarzenegger leaves mixed legacy in California

Carey in the first successful recall of a sitting governor in California history, Schwarzenegger followed through on a campaign promise to wipe out an increase in the car tax on his first day in office, punching a \$6 billion annual hole in the state budget.

He kept his promise to be a different kind of governor than Californians had seen before.

The perennially tanned seven-time Mr. Olympia confidently strode the halls of the state Capitol in designer suits and snakeskin cowboy boots as adoring children and adults jostled for photos. The crowds still clamor for a shot with Schwarzenegger, even as his approval rating has fallen to 32 percent—about the same as Davis' when he was recalled.

Deals were brokered over stogies and schnapps in a swank smoking tent he erected in the garden of the governor's office in the state Capitol. In the hall outside his office, where his name is emblazoned in gold lettering, reporters one day found a 250-pound bronze bear had been installed. Never one to shy from a camera, Schwarzenegger posed for pics with a 7-foot python coiled around his neck at the state fair.

Bones were broken and stitches were needed when the “Austrian Oak” (a nickname from his bodybuilding days) crashed on his Harley-Davidson while riding without a proper motorcycle permit, then later shattered his femur while skiing in Sun Valley, Idaho. He also was hospitalized for a rapid heartbeat and had surgery to repair a knee he injured while working out, but says he still lifts weights every day.

When lawmakers didn't go along with him, he called them “girlie men” for failing to stand up to special interests he said controlled their agenda. He once sent the Democratic leader of the

state Senate a metal sculpture of bull testicles the size of a football, urging him to have the “fortitude” to make deep cuts to social service programs.

In one of hundreds of events to promote cutting government spending, he appeared in front of a giant faucet spewing red-colored water—symbolizing red ink—in a stunt straight out of the movies.

He alternately praised and vilified fellow Republicans, telling delegates to a convention of his own party in a public speech that the California GOP was “dying at the box office.” They ignored him, and the minority party's slide continued into this November's election, when Republicans failed to win a single statewide office.

Many of Schwarzenegger's promises never came true.

He pledged to “blow up the boxes” of government, but his structural reforms have been modest. The boards and commissions he railed against remain largely intact, and he continued the political legacy of rewarding termed-out lawmakers by naming them to six-figure jobs on obscure boards that meet infrequently.

He promised to get state government to live within its means, and then used borrowing and accounting gimmicks to close budget deficits.

In his first full year in office, Schwarzenegger persuaded Californian voters to borrow \$15 billion to refinance the deficit, adding to future budget problems. Later, he added more than \$37 billion in borrowing for roads, schools, levee repairs and affordable housing projects. He is supporting an \$11 billion bond for water conservation and storage projects that will be on the 2012 ballot.

He defends the infrastructure borrowing as an investment in the future.

After encountering so many roadblocks, the centrist Republican sought, and won, some major political reforms that are expected to bear fruit in the future.

They include a voter-approved measure that removes the power to draw legislative districts from lawmakers and gives it to an independent commission. He also championed an open primary system approved by voters in which the top two primary vote-getters will appear on the general election ballot, regardless of party affiliation. Both changes are designed to favor more moderate politicians and, in theory, send fewer party ideologues to Sacramento.

“Whatever success or lack thereof the governor had blowing up the boxes and changing the state's financial fortunes, he does deserve credit for leading the charge on three important political reforms which in the aggregate will help the next governor bring the state's financial affairs into balance,” said former Gov. Davis.

He cited legislative redistricting, the open primary and Schwarzenegger's pursuit of a rainy day fund, which will appear on the ballot in 2012.

Schwarzenegger's tack to the center came after he lost some of his swagger in the wake of the disastrous 2005 special election, when Californians rejected all four measures he placed on the ballot, with teachers and nurses leading the fight against him. The governor seemed contrite in the aftermath.

“If I would do another ‘Terminator’ movie I would have Terminator travel back in time and tell Arnold not to have a special election. I should have also listened to my wife who said, ‘Don't do it,’” he said at a press conference after the fiasco.

Schwarzenegger's call for a special

election just two years after the recall caught lawmakers by surprise, angered voters who were tired of going to the polls and undermined the goodwill he had cultivated since replacing Davis.

After the drubbing, he replaced most of his top aides, named a Democrat as his chief of staff and aligned himself closer with the Democrats who controlled the Senate and Assembly. In the year before the recession hit, he signed what has become his biggest legacy in office—a law sponsored by Democrats that has made California a global leader in combating climate change.

It is expected to transform how people travel, how utilities generate power and how businesses use electricity in the coming years. Last month, voters refused to suspend the law because of the poor economy.

Schwarzenegger won re-election that year after a campaign in which he pledged coalition-building, for which he coined a new political term, “post-partisanship.”

“Post-partisanship is Republicans and Democrats actively giving birth to new ideas together,” Schwarzenegger said during his 2007 inauguration speech.

Schwarzenegger continued to dream big, seeking an overhaul of the health care market in California. The package of bills eventually collapsed, in part because the cost to the state was projected to hit \$3 billion a year.

In retrospect, 2006 and 2007 represent a lost opportunity for Schwarzenegger. At its core, the recall election was about voter disgust with California's budgeting system, and Schwarzenegger promised to fix it.

He largely avoided the matter during the heart of his tenure to focus on infrastructure spending, global warming and health care reform. By the time the recession was squeezing the state ever tighter in 2008, it was too late to build the political capital needed for major budget and tax reforms.

The recommendations of a bipartisan tax commission, for example, fizzled last year.

Now, Schwarzenegger leaves incoming Gov. Jerry Brown in virtually the same fiscal position he inherited but with fewer options to fix it. After successive years of gimmicks to close the gaps, California's deficit is estimated at \$28 billion over the next 18 months.

Its schools and infrastructure are stressed, state government workers are disheartened and seven in 10 residents believe the state is on the wrong track. Gridlock and hyper-partisanship has replaced political discourse in Sacramento, and unemployment has been above 12 percent since mid-2009. Schwarzenegger recently won some concessions from unions on pensions, but not the sweeping changes he had sought.

Cannon said that after a promising start, Schwarzenegger failed to engage rank-and-file lawmakers who could have helped him broker deals.

“A lot of the work of a governor, as a long line of governors starting with Earl Warren showed, is how you're able to negotiate with the Legislature ... the governor and the Legislature together never really got their hands dirty on the fiscal issues,” Cannon said. “He was elected to do that. That's what he campaigned on.”

Campus Life

Korean students practice English, learn island culture

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A total of 155 Korean students flew to Saipan and visited Garapan Elementary School to learn more about the island culture and use their English communication skills.

The students arrived on Sunday and took part in the exchange program with students from Garapan Elementary School from Dec. 27 to 28.

Accompanied by 17 school teachers and officials, the Korean students are part of the English Excellence Program of six participating middle schools in Seoul.

Program coordinator Maria Seo said students of the English Excellence Program learn the language for 160 hours per year



Maria Seo, teacher coordinator for the English Excellence Program in Joongrang Middle School, gestures as she thanked Garapan Elementary School students and teachers who participated in the cultural exchange program.



Sixth grader Amanda Somol hands souvenir necklaces to Korean students yesterday morning.



Garapan Elementary School principal Yvonne Pangelinan, right, addresses the visiting students as English Excellence Program teacher Maria Seo looks on.



Fourth grader Erica Tubera, right, interacts with a male Korean student.

and are given an opportunity to practice their communication skills through visits to English-speaking countries.

"Students want to show their abilities to other students who speak English as their original or mother tongue," Seo told *Saipan Tribune* in an interview yesterday.

According to Seo, this is the first time that they integrated with their program a visit to Saipan and a public school at that.

Seo, who lived on the island of Tahiti, disclosed that she has thought a lot about Saipan then. "At that time, I was thinking that Saipan is a safe country," she added.

With Saipan being a U.S. territory and its proximity to Korea, Seo deems it advantageous for the students in their program to visit the island.

Seo said a young



English Excellence Program teacher coordinator Maria Seo, left, smiles for the camera during the Korean teachers' meeting at the Garapan Elementary School library.

Korean national who immigrated to Saipan also became a factor in making the trip to the island.

She said Eunice Park, who has won numerous forensic league competitions and speaks perfect English, will serve as a good model for Korean students who want to learn more about the English language.

Garapan Elementary School principal Yvonne Pangelinan said the visit was also an occasion for the students to learn about island culture.

She said six classroom teachers, three cultural heritage teachers, and some thirty students demonstrated island culture to the visiting students through weaving and local dance.

"We want to open our doors to a foreign school. We want to have the students experience interacting with different cultures because it's

all about education," said Pangelinan.

Pangelinan thanked school teachers and students who took part in the exchange program despite their Christmas vacation.

The principal also thanked the visiting Korean students, teachers, and school officials for choosing their school and donating soccer balls for the local students.

Seo described the people of Saipan as "so nice and kind" and said they would welcome them with the same hospitality when they visit Korea.

She added that they are looking at integrating a regular visit to their English program. "I want to give the students a lot of opportunities to speak English," she said.



Garapan Elementary School sixth grade teacher Peter Loken assists a female Korean student in their interview activity yesterday.

Green Meadow students shine in PGFC competition



Green Meadow School's grades 3 to 5 students pose after participating in the PGFC competition at the Hopwood Junior High School on Dec. 4, 2010.



Kindergarten to second grade students of Green Meadow School pose after participating in the PGFC competition at the Hopwood Junior High School on Dec. 4, 2010.

Green Meadow School management, staff, and parents congratulate all the GMS students who participated in the recent PGFC competition held at the Hopwood Junior High School on Dec. 4, 2010. GMS students and their hardworking coaches proved once again their hard

work and dedication to excellence. The students' success in the competition also reflects the untiring and loving support of parents for their competing children.

Congratulations to all participants and winners! Thank you to all the coaches and parents.

K-2 DIVISION (KINDER - 2ND GRADES)

- 1st Dramatic Interpretation B: Jhanylin Marielle Cruz, 2nd grade
- 1st Humorous Interpretation: Kristina Crisostomo, 2nd grade
- 1st Dramatic Interpretation C: Jill Anne Mallari, K5
- 1st Reader's Forum MC: Aldraine Angelo Galang, 2nd grade
- 2nd Dramatic Interpretation B: Alyson Red Camacho, 1st grade
- 2nd Duo B: Rayven Daca, Joshua Alfred, 1st grade
- 2nd Reader's Forum B: Kezia Christine Arugay, K5
- 2nd Choral Speaking A: Miles Navarro, Chelsea Garcia, 2nd grade
- 2nd Reader's Forum B: Kezia Christine Arugay, K5
- 2nd Choral Speaking A: Miles Navarro, Chelsea Garcia, Christian Edward Mendoza, Renz Lester Satur, Jhanylin Marielle Cruz, 2nd grade
- 2nd Choral Speaking B: Rayven Daca, Rownel Jody Coloma, Joshua Alfred, Princess Casey Melchor, Aljanah Manabat, 1st grade
- 3rd Humorous Interpretation: Raphael Christian Galang, K5
- 3rd Dramatic Interpretation C: Leunyce Regalado, K5
- 3rd Reader's Forum MA: Alyson Red Camacho, 1st grade
- 4th Choral Speaking B: Mikee Mame Mendoza, Christian Palattao, Aldraine Angelo Galang, 2nd grade
- 4th Reader's Forum B: Christian Ted Pamintuan, K5
- 4th DUO A: Callia Lucenara, Danielle Nicole Sacramento, K4
- 4th Humorous Interpretation: Jill Anne Mallari, K5
- 4th DUO B: Miles Navarro, Chelsea Garcia, 2nd grade
- 5th DUO A: Marie Ann Hembra, Aljanah Manabat, 1st grade

Coaches: Myrna Medina, Joy Chapap, Leonor Marfil, Marilyn Divino

3-5 DIVISION (3rd - 5th GRADES)

- 1st DUO A: Monica Aira Uti, Ezekiel Alfred, 5th grade
- 1st Choral Speaking A: Angel Mae Oropesa, Kimherly Ann Dela Cruz, Ashley Reganit, 3rd grade
- 2nd Choral Speaking A: Monica Aira Uti, Mary Grace Briones, Chekaina Coloma, 5th grade
- 2nd Dramatic Interpretation B: Chekaina Coloma, 5th grade
- 3rd Dramatic Interpretation B: Pionnah Rosej Gregorio, 5th grade
- 3rd Dramatic Interpretation A: En Ming Cacdac, 4th grade
- 3rd DUO C: Gabrielle Shanikka Flores, Annia Sofia Saturno, 4th grade
- 3rd Impromptu A: Amelito Dalusong, Jr., 5th grade
- 3rd Choral Speaking A: Joshua Saturno, Ezekiel Alfred, Amelito Dalusong, Jr., 5th grade
- 4th Choral Speaking A: Gabrielle Shanikka Flores, Gelomener Miko Narciso, Angel Seal Legaspi, 4th grade
- 5th Reader's Forum MC: Robin Agbayani, 3rd grade

Coaches: Eleonor Alejo, Manuel Castro, Bona Angeles

Life & Style

Kevin Spacey comes out of hiding

By **DONNA FREYDKIN**
USA TODAY

NEW YORK—There's a reason you hear Kevin Spacey's name only when he wants you to.

The two-time Oscar winner spends most of his time in London, where he's artistic director of the Old Vic theater. And he emerges only to hype a new release, like the political dramedy "Casino Jack," in theaters now. Spacey just earned a best-comedy-actor Golden Globe nomination for playing disgraced lobbyist Jack Abramoff.

"For me, it's fantastic. It's a wonderful surprise. I'm very honored by this because it's really the first central role I've done in about seven years," Spacey, 51, says of the recognition.

For him, wheeling and dealing in one of Abramoff's signature hats was a no-brainer: "It was an amazing part, very larger than life."

And basically the opposite of the reserved Spacey, who is known for his work and little else. Living as a private citizen, whose personal life is off-limits to the media, "really doesn't take that much effort. (People) go to the restaurants where the paparazzi are. I don't go to those restaurants. I do something I feel passionate about or something I'm supporting, so I don't show up at every opening," says Spacey.

"I'm an actor and occasionally a director. But first, I'm a human being. If you're consistent, eventually you get boring."

As anyone who has seen one of Spacey's infamous dead-on impressions of Johnny Carson or Christopher Walken knows, the actor is anything but dry in person. "He kept the set very light," says his "Casino" co-star Jon Lovitz. "He doesn't have a fat head. He knows how to make a scene work, and he



MCT

Kevin Spacey attends the World Premiere of "The Life of David Gale" in Los Angeles, California, on Tuesday, February 18, 2003.

makes you better. It's like playing tennis with someone who's better than you."

And he's quick on his feet.

When asked why he kept checking his BlackBerry during a breakfast interview, Spacey makes a mock sad face. "I'm seeing if Woody (Allen) has called. (Martin) Scorsese never calls," he retorts, referring to two storied directors he wants to work with.

Spacey is a big believer in the right to privacy—with a caveat. "I don't believe there's anything about a person's personal life that's in the public interest, unless they are, you know, abusing funds, doing something that's so remarkably hypocritical that it is in the public interest that it be exposed," he says.

Certainly, that applies to the connected Abramoff and the politicians with whom he hobnobbed. The Washington power broker was involved in a corruption scandal and pleaded guilty to fraud, conspiracy and tax evasion in 2006; he's now out of prison after serving a

shortened six-year sentence.

The role was irresistible to Spacey, who plays Abramoff with a mix of pathos, intensity and joie de vivre. Plus, it was a way for the actor to get back in the moviemaking game after focusing on theater work.

"I spent 12 years being driven, having my own personal ambition about making it in the movies. It went better than I could have hoped. And then I went, 'OK, now what?'" says Spacey, who also has the comedy "Horrible Bosses" out next year. "I want to do something else, so I made a left turn. Over the next five years, I'll be doing more film. Now I want to begin to build the kind of work I like to do. When I leave the Old Vic, I don't want to start building then."

Spacey says he's decisive and methodical about planning his career, always looking at the bigger picture. "I don't put

things in isolation. I put things in a trajectory of what am I going to be doing over the next five years," he says. "There isn't a single thing I turned down that I lost any sleep over. It hasn't been a struggle. I made a decision, and when I make a decision, that's it. The decision was everything else follows the Old Vic."

One thing not in his five-year plan? A career in politics.

"The system is broken, so why would I knowingly walk into a system that I know doesn't work? I have no interest in it, personally, and if I want to be effective and do anything, I think I can be effective behind the scenes, as I have been and will continue to be without making myself a target. It doesn't interest me," says Spacey. "I believe in public service and I believe in education. But the idea of running for office? That holds no interest for me."

The Top 10 pop singles of 2010

By **GLENN GAMBOA**
NEWSDAY

Maybe it's the economy. Or the iTunes "Singles rule!" business model. Or even the Twitter-ization of creative thought. Whatever the reason, 2010 was a great year for singles, across the board, as more and more artists found ways to boil down their musical visions into one short burst of creativity. Here's a look at some of the best.

1 Cee Lo Green, "Forget You" (Elektra): This ranting kiss-off disguised as a Motown classic is smart, touching and impossible to forget, even before he gets to the thrilling bridge of soulful screams of "Why?" And, yes, the expletive-filled version with the title we can't print is way better.

2 Kanye West featuring Pusha T, "Runaway" (Roc-a-Fella): The epic tribute to self-doubt and self-loathing set to a grand, piano-driven landscape is as lovely as it is desperate. His toasts are so well-crafted and sad-sack that you almost feel bad for West. And, yes, the expletive-filled version is way better.

3 Rihanna featuring Drake, "What's My Name?" (Def Jam): Oh 'Na 'Na, this is near-perfect pop raised to high art when she quickens the pace during the "Hey boy" bits, singing those lines faster out of sheer excitement like a girl in love.

4 The National, "Blood Buzz Ohio" (4AD): The driving beat and big groove make the generally unflappable-sounding Matt Berninger seem, well, happy.

5 Robyn, "Dancing on My Own" (Interscope): A roller coaster of post-breakup emotions that Robyn somehow makes survivable through gurgling synths, an unstoppable beat and a brave delivery.

6 Jonsi, "Go Do" (XL): Pure joy, as seemingly delivered by Icelandic sprites carrying piccolos and big bass drums.

7 Tracey Thorn, "Why Does the Wind?" (Merge): Mournful synths, Thorn's gorgeous vocals and a whole lot of distrust. It's like Jonathan Franzen's "Freedom" set to music.

8 Kanye West featuring Jay-Z, Rick Ross, Bon Iver and Nicki Minaj, "Monster" (Roc-a-Fella): So much greatness bouncing around until Minaj delivers a star-making string of verses so incredible that even after dozens of listens it still amazes.

9 Macy Gray, "Kissed It" (Concord): Part peacemaker, part stadium rocker—and all sorts of fun.

10 Das Racist, "You Oughta Know" (Greedhead/ Mishka): Built over a sped-up sample of Billy Joel's "Movin' Out," the Brooklyn trio offers a laid-back version of their multi-culti hip-hop and showcase all-out cleverness.

Publisher confirms Julian Assange book deal

LONDON (AP)—WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange says he's being forced into penning an autobiography to keep his organization from going under.

New York publishing house Alfred A. Knopf confirmed Monday that it had struck a deal with the 39-year-old Australian to bring out his autobiography, whose publication date has yet to be determined.

Assange, speaking to The Sunday Times, said the deal would bring in more than \$1 million, with \$800,000 from Knopf and another 325,000 pounds

(\$500,000) from U.K. publisher Canongate. But he said he only agreed to it because he was under financial pressure.

"I don't want to write this book, but I have to," he said. "I have already spent 200,000 pounds for legal costs and I need to defend myself and to keep WikiLeaks afloat."

Assange shot to worldwide prominence on the back of a series of spectacular leaks of classified U.S. material, including the ongoing publication of some 250,000 classified State Department cables.

But with the international attention came international legal problems. The U.K.-bound activist is currently fighting extradition to Sweden, where he faces sex crimes allegations, and has said he fears moves to indict him in the United States on espionage charges. He's previously said that most of his organization's money goes to fighting off legal and technical attacks.

Knopf spokesman Paul Bogaards declined to comment on the specific figures mentioned by Assange, but confirmed that a deal had been in place since "prior to the holidays."

Bogaards said Assange was due to deliver his manuscript sometime in 2011. The autobiography's title hasn't been made public.

Knopf is an imprint of Random House Inc.



Assange



AP

In this Oct. 18, 2010 file photo, Sir Elton John, left, and husband David Furnish attend the Ninth Annual Elton John AIDS Foundation benefit 'An Enduring Vision' at Cipriani Wall Street in New York.

Piano man to diaper man: Elton John becomes a dad

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Sir Elton John is holding close a new tiny dancer.

The piano man and husband David Furnish have become parents to a 7-pound, 15-ounce (3.6-kilogram) baby boy born on Christmas Day. The news was first reported Monday night by USMagazine.com and confirmed to The Associated Press by John's Los Angeles-based publicist.

Zachary Jackson Levon

Furnish-John was born in California via a surrogate, whose identity is being protected by the new parents.

Zachary is the 62-year-old John's first child with the 48-year-old Furnish. The couple married in 2005.

In a joint statement, the new parents told USMagazine.com that "Zachary is healthy and doing well" and they are "overwhelmed with happiness and joy at this very special moment."

Message of Appreciation

We, the husband and children of

†Rosa Cruz Reyes

Would like to extend our most heartfelt appreciation to our relatives and friends who surrounded us with their love, prayers, kindness and support. Your thoughtful gestures and kind words have consoled our hearts beyond our expectation in such difficult times. Your presence at the daily masses, nightly rosaries and most especially at the Mass of Christian Burial was very comforting. Special Thanks To: Fr. Isidro Ogumoro.

We will always remember you all in our hearts and prayers.

"May God Bless You All"

Thank you very much from the bottom of our Hearts.

Si Yu'us Ma'ase

Donicio San Nicolas Reyes, Children, and Grandchildren

Playboy pins hopes on clubs, license deals in Asia

MACAU (AP)—February marks the start of the year of the rabbit in the Chinese lunar calendar.

It may be an auspicious sign for Playboy Enterprises Inc., which opened a nightclub in Macau last month as it seeks to expand its business by licensing the trademark bunny head logo on lifestyle products in Asia, its fastest growing region.

The company, founded by Hugh Hefner in 1953, also plans to open a Playboy Mansion in 2012 in Macau, a former Portuguese colony on the southern coast of China, and has been busy cutting deals to sell Playboy-branded merchandise across Asia.

Its namesake magazine, which is banned in China and defunct in Indonesia due to violent backlash from Muslim hard-liners, has struggled with competition from the Internet, losing readers and advertisers. Playboy Enterprises hasn't turned a profit since the third quarter of 2007 and last month reported that losses widened to \$27.4 million in the most recent quarter.

The renewed focus on Asia is something of a do-or-die move for the company as it tries to transform itself from the publisher of a magazine synonymous the world over with centerfolds of bare-breasted women into an entertainment and lifestyle brand.

"It's our biggest and fastest growing market, and obviously there's a mass appeal," said chief executive Scott Flanders. "I think we're more popular



In this photo taken Saturday, Dec. 18, 2010, waitresses pose inside the Playboy Club at the Sands Casino in Macau.

even in Asia than we are in the U.S. We're more of a fashion brand. We're more like Louis Vuitton."

Playboy had been trying to open a club in Macau for a long time, Flanders said. The company finally managed to reach a deal with Sands China Ltd., a unit of casino operator Las Vegas Sands Corp., which is led by billionaire Sheldon Adelson.

The 12,000-square-foot (1,115-square-meter) club opened Nov. 20 atop the Sands hotel-casino, staffed by 18 Playboy "bunnies" wearing an updated

version of the signature outfit of bunny ears, fluffy cottontail, corset and cuffs.

The bunnies—from the U.S., Australia, Estonia, Hong Kong and Macau—serve drinks and chat with customers. The club, decorated with black tile and dark velvet curtains, features private gaming rooms and offers sweeping views of the neon-lit Macau skyline.

The club aims to attract the wealthy, high-spending Chinese who flock to Macau, the only place in China where gambling is legal.

"We want people to come in, wheth-

er they're local or from Zhuhai, Shenzhen, Hong Kong or Guangzhou," said Reggie Martin, the club's general manager, naming several of the surrounding cities.

Macau returned to Chinese rule in 1999, although it has retained its own legal system. It has become the world's biggest gambling market since a casino monopoly was broken up eight years ago.

Martin said the club is aimed at men and women, gamblers and non-gamblers.

"It's by no means even close to being a gentleman's club," he said. The menu features a few localized specialties such as bunny dim sum—Playboy bunny-shaped shrimp dumplings—at 4 pieces for 80 Macau patacas (\$10).

The Playboy Mansion that is set to open in another Sands development will sprawl over 30,000 square feet.

Playboy owned and operated more than 30 clubs around the world starting in 1960. They started losing money in the 1970s, and the last closed in 1991. This time around, Playboy is merely collecting a fee for licensing the use of its name on the venue, Flanders said.

Clubs have also opened this year in Las Vegas and Cancun, Mexico, and there are plans for others in Miami and London. Flanders said the company would love to open one in Singapore, which opened its first casinos this year.

By 2011, Asia will account for 34 percent of licensing revenue, double what it was two years ago, Flanders said. By 2012, Asia will bring in \$20 million in licensing revenue, he said.

"Asia could be a growth area to Playboy since the U.S. is a mature market and Europe is becoming a mature market," said Steve Marascia, director of research at Capitol Securities.

Marascia said the clubs will help raise the brand's profile in Asia.

"Potentially, as more people in Asia become aware of Playboy, they may want to buy the products offered by (the) licensing unit," he said.

'Black Swan' dominates Online Film Critics Society award nominations

By **SUSAN KING**
LOS ANGELES TIMES

LOS ANGELES—"Black Swan" dominated the Online Film Critics Society 2010 award nominations Monday morning, earning nods for best film, best director for Darren Aronofsky, best actress for Natalie Portman, best supporting actress for Mila Kunis, as well as for original screenplay, cinematography and editing.

"The Social Network," which has

won the lion's share of critics honors so far this awards season, scored six nominations: best film, best director for David Fincher, best actor for Jesse Eisenberg, best supporting actor for Andrew Garfield, adapted screenplay for Aaron Sorkin, and editing.

Rounding out the best picture list are "Inception," "Toy Story 3," "True Grit" and "Winter's Bone." Notably missing from the list was the acclaimed historical drama "The King's Speech," which picked up nominations for best

actor for Colin Firth, supporting actor Geoffrey Rush, and screenplay, and "The Fighter," which received nominations in the supporting categories for Christian Bale, Amy Adams and Melissa Leo.

Joining Aronofsky and Fincher in the hunt for best director are Danny Boyle for "127 Hours," Joel and Ethan Coen for "True Grit" and Christopher Nolan for "Inception."

Vying with Eisenberg and Firth in the best actor category are Jeff Bridg-

es for "True Grit," James Franco for "127 Hours," Ryan Gosling for "Blue Valentine" and Edgar Ramirez for "Carlos."

Besides Portman, best actress nominations went to Annette Bening for "The Kids Are All Right," Kim Hye-ja for "Mother," Nicole Kidman for "Rabbit Hole" and Jennifer Lawrence for "Winter's Bone."

Rounding out the supporting actor category are John Hawkes for "Winter's Bone" and Mark Ruffalo for

"The Kids Are All Right."

Hailee Steinfeld for "True Grit" and Jacki Weaver for "Animal Kingdom" complete the list of supporting actress nominees.

Best foreign film nominations went to "Carlos," "Dogtooth," "The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo," "Mother" and "A Prophet." Vying in the best documentary category are "Catfish," "Exit Through the Gift Shop," "Inside Job," "Joan Rivers: A Piece of Work," "Restrepo" and "Waiting for 'Superman.'"

DA allowing residue for tests by Jackson doctor

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Prosecutors on Monday said that defense attorneys for the doctor charged in Michael Jackson's death can have half the residue left in syringes and other medical items found in the star's bedroom for testing by a private laboratory.

"The people ask that the defense be given one-half of the medical evidence so that they can hire and pay for their own defense-requested testing," according to a motion filed by prosecutors, in response to a request by Dr. Conrad Murray's lawyers seeking the tests.

Murray has pleaded not guilty to involuntary manslaughter in the pop star's death by acute propofol intoxication on June 25, 2009. Propofol is an anesthetic.

The doctor's defense team wanted the coroner's office to conduct testing on fluids in two syringes and an IV bag found in Jackson's rented mansion. They want to determine how much propofol and painkiller lidocaine were in the items.

Murray's attorneys have struck an

urgent tone regarding the need to test the medical items, saying the evidence was deteriorating. They described the fluids in one of the syringes as having turned to "salt" and contended the testing should have been done immediately after Jackson's death.

The contentious motion filed by Deputy District Attorney David Walgren disputed the defense's statements, and said prosecutors will agree to tests only if they are done correctly.

Coroner's officials have said in court filings that the testing was not necessary to determine Jackson's cause of death.

Superior Court Judge Michael Pastor has said testing is not needed to determine if there is enough evidence to order Murray for to stand trial.

Pastor will hear the arguments on the tests on Wednesday—six days before Murray is scheduled to appear for a preliminary hearing to determine if there is enough evidence for the cardiologist to stand trial.



Nine Rhodesian Ridgeback puppies from a litter of 17, look out of their box in Nauen, 50 kilometers outside Berlin on Monday, Dec. 20, 2010.

German dog to be spayed after 17-puppy litter

BERLIN (AP)—Ten weeks after giving birth to 17 puppies, the Rhodesian Ridgeback mother is to be spayed while her cute offspring leave for new homes, the dog's owner said Thursday.

Ramona Wegemann said the 26-hour labor was very tiresome for the mother, Etana, and she does not want to endanger the dog's health with another pregnancy.

Wegemann said she had to personally feed the eight female and nine male puppies with a bottle filled with special milk for several weeks, because Etana's nine nipples couldn't cope with the demand.

Caring for the puppies has "turned

out to be a full-time job," she said in a telephone interview with the Associated Press that was at times interrupted by the din of puppies joyfully barking in the background.

Etana gave birth to the puppies on Sept. 28 in Wegemann's house in Ebereschenhof near Berlin.

Wegemann, a 32-year-old freelance animal psychiatrist, said she has been feeding the dogs at least five times a day. And when the puppies are not hungry they constantly want to be entertained inside their giant box in the family's living room.

"Now they sometimes also play with

each other. But we still play with them. We also make them listen to CDs with noises from traffic, construction work or yelling kids to prepare them for real life," she said.

"All the puppies are well," she said. "We play with them in the snow and have started teaching them how to sit still."

The dog family, however, has started to shrink as one by one the puppies have left for new homes. Wegemann and her husband plan to give most of the puppies away.

"We usually have only three dogs, Etana and two others. But now our living room is full of them," she said.

Alanis Morissette gives birth to a baby boy

NEW YORK (AP)—It's a boy for Alanis Morissette and Mario "Souleye" Treadway.

A representative for the 36-year-old singer said in an e-mail Monday that Ever Imre Morissette-Treadway was born Dec. 25. The e-mail says "all are healthy and happy."

No other details were available.

Morissette, whose songs include "Ironie" and "You Oughta Know," has won several Grammys, including album of the year for 1995's "Jagged Little Pill."

She also earned a Golden Globe nomination for best original motion picture song for "Wunderkind" from "The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe," and appeared as God in Kevin Smith's 1999 film "Dogma."

She had been previously been engaged to actor Ryan Reynolds.



AP
In a May 14, 2008 file photo Alanis Morissette poses at a rehearsal studio in Burbank, Calif.

Natalie Portman to wed 'Black Swan' choreographer



AP
In this film publicity image released by Fox Searchlight, Natalie Portman is shown in a scene from "Black Swan."

NEW YORK (AP)—Natalie Portman is pregnant with her first child and is engaged to Benjamin

Millepied, the choreographer of "Black Swan." A publicist for Portman confirmed Monday that

the couple are engaged and expecting, but declined to give any further details. People magazine first reported the news.

The 29-year-old actress and Millepied, a well-regarded ballet dancer and choreographer, met during the making of "Black Swan," Darren Aronofsky's psychological thriller that stars Portman as a ballet dancer. She's been nominated for best actress by the Golden Globes and the Screen Actors Guild.

Millepied played a small on-screen role in the film as a dancer.

Portman also stars in Ivan Reitman's upcoming romantic comedy, "No Strings Attached."

Cuban ballerina Alonso gets top teaching prize

HAVANA (AP)—Cuba has honored the celebrated ballerina and National Ballet director Alicia Alonso with its top award for arts instruction.

The 90-year-old prima ballerina assoluta received this year's National Prize for Artistic Teaching at a ceremony Monday in a wood-floor studio at the ballet's headquarters. Alonso said she was touched.

She told admirers, journalists and dance students that "the most wonderful moment in life is when one can teach others what one has learned."

Alonso rose to stardom with the American Ballet Theater. She has led the Cuban National Ballet for decades, despite being nearly blind.



AP
Cuba's Prima Ballerina Alicia Alonso, center, receives flowers from ballet students at the headquarters of Cuba's National Ballet after receiving the 2010 National Award of Education in Arts in Havana, Cuba, Monday, Dec. 27, 2010.

Teen charged with breaking into Tyler Perry's home

ATLANTA (AP)—An 18-year-old woman has been charged with breaking into the Atlanta home of filmmaker Tyler Perry.

Police said Perry's bodyguard caught Chloe Ware

early Thursday morning, but two others escaped. A phone listing for Ware could not be found. It was unclear whether she had an attorney.

She was charged with prowling and criminal tres-

pass, then released. Police are still searching for two other suspects.

Perry directed this year's film "For Colored Girls" and co-directed last year's "Precious" with Oprah Winfrey.

Broadway theaters remain open despite winter storm

NEW YORK (AP)—The East Coast blizzard hasn't left Broadway stuck.

Paul Libin, chairman of The Broadway League, says the Great White Way is open for business as usual, with shows going on as scheduled Monday. He adds that cancellations may mean hard-to-get seats may be available. Theatergoers are being advised to contact their point of purchase for information about refunds or exchanges.

Broadway theaters may be open, but getting to them may be another story, with area airports shut down, subways delayed and huge snowdrifts across New York City making streets and roads difficult to navigate.

Thailand bans film on transgender dad

BANGKOK (AP)—Thailand's film board has banned a movie about a transgender father struggling to raise two children, a move the director says highlights the conservative side of Thai society despite its freewheeling reputation.

The National Film Board ruled earlier this week that the film, "Insects in the Backyard," cannot be shown in Thailand because it contains scenes that are immoral and pornographic.

Authorities have not yet published a public explanation of the ban issued Wednesday, but culture and film officials said the board objected to several scenes, including at least one that showed an explicit depiction of two men having sex.

Director Tanwarin Sukkhapisit said the scenes were crucial to the story line and could not be cut. She plans to appeal the ban.

"The problem with my film wasn't that it was a gay-themed movie—because there are many gay comedies allowed in Thailand," Tanwarin said in a telephone interview Friday. "My movie was banned because it was a serious movie. It showed there can be real problems when society cannot accept sexual differences."

Thailand is known to outsiders for its tolerance of a very visible transgender community, just one aspect of the country's look-the-other-way permissiveness that sometimes runs afoul of the government's efforts to maintain traditional Buddhist values.

Transgenders are regularly seen on TV soap operas and throughout Bangkok, working at department store cosmetics counters, popular restaurants and walking the runways in numerous transgender beauty pageants. The term describes a wide range of identities, including cross-dressers, transvestites, transsexuals and those born with the physical characteristics of both sexes.

"Our society tries to show it accepts differences—but actually it doesn't," Tanwarin said.

Man on the road spends too much time in the fast lane

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: My husband travels a lot—three to four days a week. Sometimes when he's intoxicated and we're having sex, he acts like he doesn't know who I am.

I asked him once, "Are you married?" He said, "No ..." Another time I asked, "Do you have a girlfriend?" and he said, "No, but you're fine ..." The next day he has no idea he said any of this. Should I be worried?

WRONG ANSWER IN CHICAGO

DEAR WRONG ANSWER: Absolutely. You should be worried not only about the fact that your husband is probably having extracurricular sex, but also that he has a drinking problem so severe he doesn't always know who he's sleeping with. You should be worried that after a night of drinking he can't remember clearly the next day what he has said (or has possibly done).

If he won't admit he has a problem and seek help, you should contact Al-Anon (it's in your phone book, or find it online at www.al-anon.org). And you should schedule an appointment with your physician to be tested for STDs, because I'M worried he may have given you one—or more.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I moved from New Jersey to Florida 20 years ago, married my wife and started a family. My parents relocated here a few years later. When I asked if they would be living nearby, I was told, "No way! We raised our kids already." Hearing it felt hurtful.

As time has passed, they have made themselves available to a family who lives near them for baby-sitting and help running their business when the family is on vacation. We have asked my parents on several occasions if we could have some help watching our children, but they said they were too busy or it was too much to handle.

We feel we should take priority over "outsiders." But when we bring up the subject, it is met with strong opposition. We just feel like we're not good enough, and don't know how to answer our children when they ask about their grandparents. Any suggestions would be greatly appreciated.

BEWILDERED IN FLORIDA

DEAR BEWILDERED: Your situation is sad, but my advice is to accept that you won't be getting any help from—or becoming any closer to—your parents. They may have refused your requests for help because they don't care for your spouse, or your children really ARE too much for them to handle. I'm sorry.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I lost my 84-year-old mother in an accident. I called Mom's friends, many of whom are also elderly. Several of them talked on and on about their problems, their poor health, their spouses' poor health—and one even went on and on about her hot water tank "blowing up"!

Would you please remind people that when they get a courtesy call from a grieving family member to please listen, say, "Thank you for calling to let me know," and to offer condolences for their loss.

BEREAVED DAUGHTER, LIVONIA, N.Y.

DEAR BEREAVED DAUGHTER: Allow me to offer my condolences for the loss of your mother. I'm pleased to print your letter because not everyone knows how to handle a phone call such as you had to make. It's possible that the folks you called were either uncomfortable with the subject, and so they tried to deflect it by discussing what was going on in their lives—or they have heard about death so often at their age that they have become accustomed to hearing such sad news. (As for the woman who mentioned her water heater—I hope you were kind enough to refer her to a plumber.)

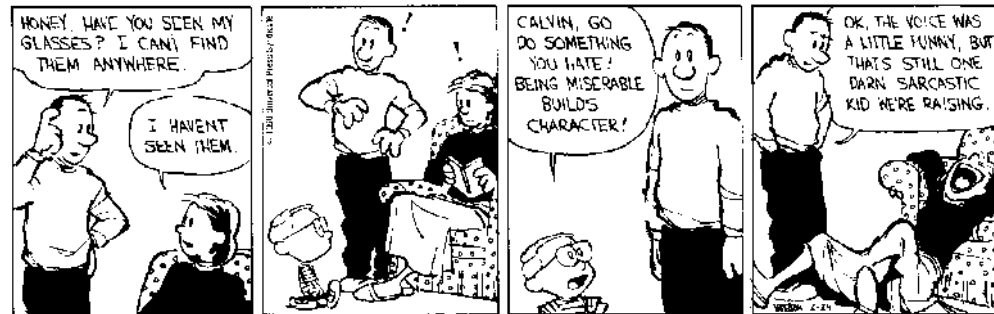
Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write *Dear Abby* at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more sociable person, order "How to Be Popular." Send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$6 (U.S. funds) to: *Dear Abby* - Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



Garfield

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Picks one or the other

5 "Casa-blanca" pianist

8 "Mamma Mia" quartet

12 Rod's partner

13 Ram's mate

14 Null and —

15 Time before the parachute opens

17 Killer whale

18 Largest human bone

19 "Iron Man" star

21 Grant's —

24 Pressure meas.

25 Opu ent.

28 Ireland

30 Deteriorate

33 A Gershwin brother

34 Fast

DOWN

1 Composer

2 Father (Fr.)

3 Abound

4 Detective

5 Coral, for one

6 Piercing tool

7 Pinochle play

8 Acknowledges

9 Elsa's story

10 "American Idol" alum

11 "An apple —"

16 To and —

20 Newspaper pg.

22 See 53-Down

23 Human, e.g.

25 Tear

26 Rage

27 Not worried at all

29 Frost

31 Eggs

32 Highland hat

34 Philbin's co-host

38 Explode

40 Classic walkways

42 Time of your life?

43 Despot

44 Re planes and such

45 Can. prov.

47 Tear to bits

48 Jane Lynch's series

49 Verve

52 Scarlet

53 With

Solution time: 21 mins.

Yesterday's answer 12-29

STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! \$99 per minute, touch-tone/relay phones. (18+ only, A King Features service, NYC.)

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Jude Law, 38; Patricia Clarkson, 51; Ted Danson, 63; Jon Voight, 72

Happy Birthday: This is a learning year that can also parlay into putting the information you acquire to work for you. Progress can be made but determination must be utilized to gain the most. A trip back in time, mentally or physically, will help you summarize what you have already done and what you must do now to prosper. Your numbers are 7, 14, 16, 21, 28, 33, 42

ARIES (March 21-April 19): You need time to rethink your strategy for the new year. Hanging on to plans that you haven't been able to execute may be the problem. Don't limit what you can do by living in the past. Forward thinking is your best bet. ★★

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Don't think about work or what you need to get done. Consider your next vacation or what courses you want to sign up for. You will take in information easily and can impress whoever you are with by putting it into practice quickly. ★★★

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Charity is fine but take care of your responsibility to family and close friends first. Changing mid-stream will confuse someone trying to get you to agree on a deal you've been working toward. Let others know exactly where you stand. ★★★★★

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Socializing with peers will lead to favorable changes in your life. Setting up meetings and dates for the new year will give you some-

thing to look forward to. Plan some romantic action. ★★★★★

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Be consistent. If you keep changing your mind or exaggerating, you will confuse or make someone angry. Emotional problems with someone you are close to will develop if you try to dictate new rules. Going out will keep you out of trouble. ★★

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Talk to a friend, neighbor or relative who can help you get things ready for an activity or event you plan to attend. You will get the cooperation and backing you require. Collaboration will lead to your success. ★★★★★

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): You'll have to take matters into your own hands and follow through with your plans if you want things done properly and on time. Keep your emotions in check and refuse to let someone's inadequacy ruin your day. ★★★

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Don't hide your feelings or play games. Get things out in the open. The time is right to make tough decisions about the future. You can reach your goals if you get rid of the dead weight you've been carrying. ★★★

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Be nice to the people around you and to those who need your help and you will bypass conflict. Someone you may be able to partner with will remind you of an interesting idea you had years ago. Accept an inevitable change at home. ★★★★★

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD
IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): You'll have to keep a poker face if you don't want to rock the boat. Your observations will be insightful and, the less you do or say, the better your chance to counteract what's happening when the time is right. ★★

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Don't let love disrupt your plans. You cannot give in to someone putting demands on you. Focus on what you can do to stabilize your life financially, emotionally and physically. Put your resolutions into play. ★★★★★

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Go over any last-minute details to make a project you are working on bigger, better and more efficient. Don't be afraid to make unusual changes. Stick to basics and the truth. Honesty will play a role. ★★★

Birthday Baby: You judge fairly and anticipate wisely. Your desire to act impulsively gets you into trouble. Your intuition will lead you to success.

Eugenia's Web sites: eugenialast.com for confidential consultations, myspace.com/eugenialast for Eugenia's blog, astroadvice.com for fun

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Saturday's SUDOKU Answer

5	6	4	3	1	2	7	9	8
2	3	1	9	8	7	4	5	6
7	9	8	4	5	6	3	1	2
9	8	2	7	4	1	6	3	5
4	7	6	5	2	3	1	8	9
1	5	3	6	9	8	2	4	7
6	1	9	2	3	5	8	7	4
3	4	7	8	6	9	5	2	1
8	2	5	1	7	4	9	6	3

Difficulty Level ★★★

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WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle. Find them horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD. The letter letters spell the Wonderword.

OLFACTORY FACTS

Solution: 8 letters

S S S R Y (F) B M E T S Y S G L
M N R I (C) V C R G E C D H A S
O I O (C) N S A N A C E N S S C
K F (D) R N U I E P I E A I O E
E F O A U K S H H T N C F L N
R T M E A E C C A O F R U I T
E U S B I R N L I N O I E N F
H P E A A E U T K O O C E E R
P I N F T M A N O S F A F S A
S E S S I M R R F I R E F M G
O A E T R A R O M A N R O E R
M S S O S L A C I M E H C L A
T A F A Z Z I P S I G N A L N
A N I M A L S O S R E Y A L C
I T N F G N U P F R F U M F F

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Yesterday's Answer: Religion
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Job Vacancy Number: 11-004

Opening Date: December 23, 2010
Closing Date: January 7, 2010


Communications Operator

DUTIES: Under the overall supervision of the Communications Manager or designee. Monitors radio communications in order to dispatch crews for troubleshooting. Answers incoming calls reporting complaints on water, sewer or power problems. Maintains file systems. Prepares overtime requests for troubleshooters. Performs data entry; logs in customer complaints. Follows up with customers in order to verify customer's experience. Performs other duties of a similar nature or level as required.

LOCATION: Administration, **SAIPAN.**
SALARY: \$11,036 to \$13,631 per annum.
POSITIONS: One (1)
CONTRACT: Two-years.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS: High School Diploma, or G.E.D., plus zero to three years of related experience required. Knowledge of: Customer service techniques; Telephone etiquette; Radios. Skill in: Providing customer service; Using two-way radios; Using computers and related software applications; Communication, interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, etc. sufficient to exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

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**Commonwealth Utilities Corporation**
JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Job Vacancy Number: 11-005

Opening Date: December 23, 2010
Closing Date: January 7, 2010


Accounting Assistant

DUTIES: Under the overall supervision of the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) or designee. Performs a wide variety of routine fiscal support activities to include: receiving and processing payments; issuing receipts; preparing daily deposit slips; opening new accounts; closing credit cards; verifying and processing payroll; running automatic credit card payments; posting invoices; preparing checks; preparing refunds; and, preparing charge vouchers. Generates and distributes routine reports. Maintains filing systems. Performs customer service activities to include assisting customers with applications, payments and in settling disputes. Assignment to various sections of the CFO division will involve additional, more specific responsibilities. Performs other duties of a similar nature or level as required.

LOCATION: Chief Financial Officer Division, **SAIPAN.**
SALARY: \$11,036 to \$12,263 per annum.
POSITIONS: One (1)
CONTRACT: Two-years.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS: High School Diploma, or G.E.D., plus zero to three years related customer service or bookkeeping experience. Knowledge of: Basic bookkeeping principles; Office procedures, methods, and equipment; Keyboarding techniques; Basic mathematical concepts; Customer service principles; Cash handling and bank deposit procedures. Skill in: Providing customer service; Performing basic mathematical calculations; Maintaining records; Keyboarding; Using standard office equipment; Tabulating, recording, and balancing transactions; Preparing routine reports; Using a computer and related software applications; Communication, interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, etc. sufficient to exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

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**Commonwealth Utilities Corporation**
JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Job Vacancy Number: 11-006

Opening Date: December 23, 2010
Closing Date: January 7, 2010

Accounting Technician

DUTIES: Under the overall supervision of the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) or designee. May help supervise or supervise lower level staff to include: prioritizing and assigning work; conducting performance evaluations; ensuring staff are trained; and, making hiring, termination, and disciplinary recommendations. Performs a wide variety of routine to moderate level fiscal support activities to include: verifying daily transactions processed by others; editing and posting daily transactions; preparing change fund at bank; preparing certification of completion of services; entering NSF checks; preparing billing cycles; reviewing tampered accounts; and, preparing billing adjustments. Generates, reviews and distributes reports. Maintains filing systems. Receives and responds to customer complaints. Assignment to various sections of the CFO division will involve additional, more specific responsibilities. Performs other duties of a similar nature or level as required.

LOCATION: Chief Financial Officer Division, **SAIPAN.**
SALARY: \$15,139 to \$16,155 per annum.
POSITIONS: Two (2)
CONTRACT: Two-years.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS: EITHER High School Diploma (or G.E.D.) and four years of bookkeeping or related fiscal support experience OR an Associate's degree in a related field. Knowledge of: Supervisory principles; Basic bookkeeping principles; Office procedures, methods, and equipment; Keyboarding techniques; Basic mathematical concepts; Customer service principles; Banking procedures. Skill in: Monitoring and evaluating staff; Prioritizing and assigning work to staff; Providing customer service; Paying attention to detail in order to find errors; Performing basic mathematical calculations; Maintaining records; Keyboarding; Using standard office equipment; Tabulating, recording, and balancing transactions; Preparing routine reports; Using a computer and related software applications; Communication, interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, etc. sufficient to exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

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**Commonwealth Utilities Corporation**
JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Job Vacancy Number: 11-007

Opening Date: December 23, 2010
Closing Date: January 7, 2010


Accounting Specialist

DUTIES: Under the overall supervision of the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) or designee. May supervise lower level staff to include: prioritizing and assigning work; conducting performance evaluations; ensuring staff are trained; and, making hiring, termination, and disciplinary recommendations. Performs paraprofessional accounting support activities to include: verifying fund balances and obligating expenditures; reviewing open accounts and contracts; editing, posting delinquency notices and disconnection lists; preparing service orders for termination of accounts; processing travel documents; maintaining subsidiary ledgers; and, processing and filing payroll documents. Generates, reviews, analyzes, edits and distributes a wide variety of reports. Establishes and maintains filing systems. Receives and responds to complex customer complaints. Assignment to various sections of the CFO division will involve additional, more specific responsibilities. Performs other duties of a similar nature or level as required.

LOCATION: Chief Financial Officer Division, **SAIPAN.**
SALARY: \$21,612 TO \$22,920 per annum.
POSITIONS: Four (4)
CONTRACT: Two-years.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS: Associate Degree in Accounting and one to four years of progressively responsible experience related to the area of assignment. Knowledge of: Supervisory principles; Basic budgeting principles; Basic accounting principles; Billing procedures; Basic mathematical concepts; Customer service principles; Banking procedures. Skill in: Monitoring and evaluating staff; Prioritizing and assigning work to staff; Providing customer service; Paying attention to detail in order to find errors; Performing basic mathematical calculations; Maintaining records; Preparing reports; Reconciling accounts and ledgers; Using a computer and related software applications; Communication, interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, etc. sufficient to exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

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**Commonwealth Utilities Corporation**
JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Job Vacancy Number: 11-008

Opening Date: December 23, 2010
Closing Date: January 7, 2010

Accountant

DUTIES: Under the overall supervision of the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) or designee. May supervise accounting support staff to include: prioritizing and assigning work; conducting performance evaluations; ensuring staff are trained; and, making hiring, termination, and disciplinary recommendations. Maintains, monitors, and balances assigned funds. Performs professional accounting responsibilities, which includes: preparing general journal entries; ensuring proper departmental approvals; auditing accounts; assisting with annual audits; and, performing other related activities. Researches information on accounts for customers, internal departments, and other interested parties. Prepares, reviews, and submits a variety of reports, reconciliations, and statements to and from internal departments, financial institutions, and/or Local, State, and Federal agencies. Performs month-end and year-end closing of books of accounts for assigned funds. Assignment to various sections of the CFO division will involve additional, more specific responsibilities. Performs other duties of a similar nature or level as required.

LOCATION: Chief Financial Officer Division, **SAIPAN.**
SALARY: \$35,884 TO \$41,794 per annum.
POSITIONS: Three (3)
CONTRACT: Two-years.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS: Bachelors Degree in Accounting, Finance or a related field, plus one to three years of professional level accounting or finance. Knowledge of: Supervisory principles; Generally Accepted Accounting Principles and other applicable laws, rules and regulations; Basic mathematics; Fixed asset accounting. Skill in: Monitoring and evaluating staff; Prioritizing and assigning work to staff; Applying Federal, State, and/or Local laws, rules, and regulations; Performing mathematical calculations; Applying accounting procedures and principles; Recording, analyzing, verifying, reconciling, and reporting accounting transactions; Operating a 10-key machine; Preparing and analyzing financial statements and reports; Using computers and related software applications; Communication, interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, etc. sufficient to exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

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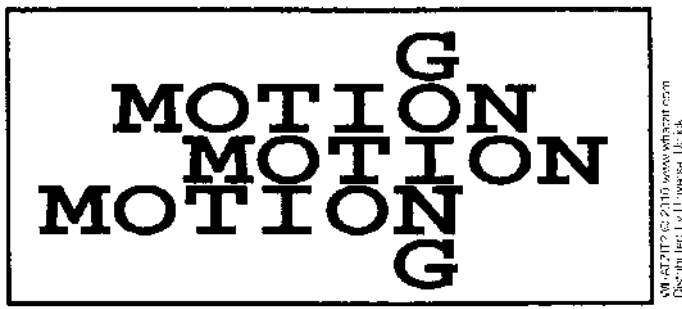
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Brees shakes off INTs, leads Saints to win



ATLANTA (AP)—After tossing up two throws in the fourth quarter that he wishes never left his hand, Drew Brees connected on the one that really counted for the New Orleans Saints.

Brees shook off a pair of interceptions in the final period, hooking up with rookie Jimmy Graham on a 6-yard touchdown with 3:24 remaining to give New Orleans a 17-14 victory over the Atlanta Falcons on Monday night. Brees and the Saints denied the Falcons from clinching the NFC South title and home-field advantage in the playoffs.

And Who Dat going back to the playoffs? That would be the Saints, who showed they aren't ready to give up their Super Bowl title with a win that should give them a huge boost of confidence heading into the postseason.

The Falcons (12-3), meanwhile, might be having some doubts after their eight-game winning streak was snapped at the Georgia Dome, where they have been virtually unbeatable in Mike Smith's three years as coach.

Still, the loss doesn't ruin Atlanta's two main goals. The Falcons can still wrap up their first division crown since 2004 and home field through the NFC playoffs by knocking off two-win Carolina at home in the final week of the season.

But this one stung, especially since there's a real possibility these teams will meet again in the playoffs.

"It feels good," Brees said. "You just want to punch your ticket to the big show, and we've done that. Obviously Carolina needs to beat Atlanta next week so we can get that one seed."

Brees completed six straight passes on a 13-play, 90-yard drive, the last one to the rookie tight end for the winning score. That made up for Brees' ill-advised attempt to flip a backhanded pass to escape heavy pressure, but instead the throw was picked off by Chauncey Davis and returned 26 yards for a touchdown in the opening minute of the fourth—giving the Falcons their first lead all night.

It didn't last, even after Brees was picked off again on a brilliant play by defensive end John Abraham, who batted the ball high in the air then grabbed it himself.

"That's part of it," Brees said. "It's the ebb and flow of the game. Sometimes you have a clean pocket. Sometimes they're getting after you."

"In the end, we found a way to win." After Abraham's interception, the Saints held the Falcons just past midfield, then got the ball back at their own 10. The first two plays lost a yard, but Brees connected with Lance Moore on an 18-yard pass to keep the drive going.

Brees didn't miss again, completing his next five throws to drive the Saints down the field. On third-and-3 at the 6, he flicked a quick pass to Graham slanting over the middle. He got a step on William Moore and Brees delivered the ball just out of the reach of Sean Weatherspoon for the touchdown.

Matt Ryan broke off a career-long 20-yard run, but the Saints held at the 43 and Atlanta chose to punt. Brees never gave them the ball back, completing two more passes before Pierre Thomas dove over for a game-clinching first down on third and inches.



New Orleans Saints quarterback Drew Brees (9) throws a winning touchdown pass during the fourth quarter as Atlanta Falcons Jonathan Babineaux (95) defends, in an NFL football game at the Georgia Dome in Atlanta on Monday, Dec. 27, 2010.

"We don't want to feel this way the rest of the season," Ryan said. "We're going to work hard to make sure we don't."

The Falcons didn't play their typically clean game.

An errant snap by Todd McClure out of the shotgun was recovered by

New Orleans, setting up Thomas' 2-yard touchdown run that gave the Saints a 10-0 lead and breaking Atlanta's streak of seven straight games

without a fumble.

Ryan connected with Roddy White on a 7-yard touchdown pass that made it 10-7 at halftime, but Atlanta squandered another chance when Michael Turner fumbled the ball away on second-and-goal at the New Orleans 1. It was Turner's first fumble of the season.

Brees completed 35 of 49 for 302 yards, easily winning the duel with Ryan (15 of 29 for 148 yards) on a night when both teams struggled to run the ball effectively.

Trying to avoid a sack, Brees got away with a flip back to Thomas in the third quarter. The move backfired when he tried it again in the fourth.

With Jonathan Babineaux bearing down on him, Brees attempted to backhand a pass to a receiver standing at least 15 yards away. Bad move. The ball fluttered right into the arms of the 271-pound Davis, who rumbled 26 yards for his first career touchdown with 14:14 remaining.

After the ensuing kickoff, Brees drove the Saints right down the field, appearing to put them ahead with a 25-yard strike over the middle to Marques Colston. But the play had been whistled dead because of a false start by Jermon Bushrod, wiping out the score.

Then, on the very next play, Brees made another huge mistake. Or, it might be more appropriate to say, Abraham pulled off a tremendous play.

The 32-year-old defensive end rushed in on Brees and swatted the ball up in the air when the quarterback tried to hurriedly lob it over Abraham's outstretched right arm. The ball came down right in Abraham's arms for his first career interception.

49ers fire coach Mike Singletary

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Mike Singletary made a name for himself as a coach with that bold "I want winners!" declaration more than two years ago. Ultimately, he didn't produce enough victories to save his job.

The Hall of Fame linebacker was fired by the San Francisco 49ers on Sunday night after two disappointing seasons, including a 5-10 showing this year for a franchise that expected to win the NFC West.

The team made the announcement upon returning to the Bay Area late Sunday, several hours after San Francisco was eliminated from playoff contention with a 25-17 loss at St. Louis. Defensive line coach Jim Tomsula was promoted to interim coach and will run the team in the season finale at home against Arizona. He was to be formally introduced in a news conference Monday.

After team president and CEO Jed York told reporters in St. Louis after the loss he would think about whether Singletary would coach the final game, Singletary then was told of his dismissal back at the team's Santa Clara complex.

"I want to thank Mike Singletary for the passion and effort that he brought to this organization," York said in a statement. "He is a tremendous person for whom I will always have great respect."

York said money wasn't an object in this decision considering Singletary had two years remain-

ing on his contract.

"Obviously, we didn't achieve the things we set out to achieve. We should be a playoff team," York said in the locker room. "We aren't a playoff team this year. Very disappointed about that. We need to figure out how we can get into the playoffs and how we can start competing for Super Bowls."

San Francisco began the year with high hopes of winning the West and reaching the postseason for the first time since 2002. Singletary was 18-22 in two-plus seasons.

"One of the greatest experiences of my life was having the opportunity to coach the San Francisco 49ers," Singletary said in a statement. "What made it so special were the players. They were some of the most outstanding men I have ever been around in my life. The coaches were truly professionals. I wish the 49ers nothing but the best. I am thankful to the York family for having given me the opportunity to be a head coach in the NFL. I am indebted to them for that. I am also thankful for the Faithful fans, I am just sorry I couldn't give them more."

The 49ers opened 0-5 and will finish with a losing record for the seventh time in eight years. They went 8-8 in Singletary's first full season, then produced an unbeaten preseason this year only to drop their first five games. It was the franchise's worst start since losing seven in a row to begin a 2-14 season in 1979—in the late Hall of Famer Bill Walsh's first year as coach.

No team has recovered from an 0-5 start to reach the playoffs, but the 49ers would have made it if they had defeated the Rams and won again next Sunday. If that had happened, San Francisco would have won the tiebreaker over Seattle and St. Louis to win the division and become the first team with a losing record in a non-strike season to make the playoffs.

"You know what, I'll put it this way: a personal failure. I'm the head coach of this team and obviously wanted us to do better, felt that we could do better," Singletary said after the game Sunday. "There are some obvious questions that I hoped would be answered as the season went on, and obviously were not answered. When that happens, you end up out of the playoffs."

"I take full responsibility for every unanswered question."

The 52-year-old Singletary, who first took over as coach on an interim basis when Mike Nolan was fired in October 2008, had two years remaining on his contract. York—son of owner John York—seems ready for major change around the Niners despite having to pay Singletary.

"Money is no object," Jed York said in St. Louis. "I mean, our object is to win the Super Bowl, year in and year out be there and compete for Super Bowls. We're going to make sure we get this right."

During his debut in place of Nolan—a 34-13 loss to the Seahawks on Oct. 26, 2008 - Singletary pulled down

his pants in the locker room at halftime to make a point, benched struggling quarterback J.T. O'Sullivan in favor of Shaun Hill, and sent now-Pro Bowl and captain tight end Vernon Davis to the showers early for what he deemed inappropriate behavior following a personal foul penalty. Afterward, Singletary called out his team with the now infamous "I want winners!" speech.

"I'd rather play with 10 people and just get penalized all the way until we have to do something else rather than play with 11 when I know that right now that person is not sold out to be a part of this team," Singletary said. "It is more about them than it is about the team. Cannot play with them, cannot win with them, cannot coach with them. Can't do it. I want winners. I want people that want to win."

This year, Singletary fired offensive coordinator Jimmy Raye after Week 3, then lost secondary coach and special assistant, Johnnie Lynn, when he resigned for personal reasons earlier this month.

Singletary switched quarterbacks three different times, starting with Alex Smith, going to Troy Smith for five games even after Alex Smith's hurt non-throwing shoulder had healed, then back to Alex Smith for two games before Troy Smith started Sunday—only to give way to Alex Smith in the fourth quarter after Troy Smith had a heated exchange with Singletary.

"I'm not worried about individual things like that. What bothers me is we come in here, this is a playoff-caliber game, and we didn't get it done," York said. "And that's the bottom line."

Mavs lose Dirk but still beat Oklahoma



OKLAHOMA CITY (AP)—The Dallas Mavericks lost Dirk Nowitzki to a knee injury in the second quarter, but beat the Oklahoma City Thunder 103-93 on Monday night for their 17th victory in 18 games.

Nowitzki, from Germany, scored 13 points before leaving in the second quarter with what the Mavericks said was a sore right knee. Shawn Marion led the effort to replace him, scoring 20 points off the bench.

Dallas improved to 11-1 on the road this season, best in the NBA, and 24-5 overall.

Kevin Durant scored 28 points, one game after a season-high 44 points on Christmas against Denver. James Harden had 18 for the Thunder, who dropped their second in a row to the Mavericks this season.

Mavericks coach Rick Carlisle also missed the game due to a knee injury.



Dallas Mavericks forward Dirk Nowitzki yells after landing awkwardly during the second quarter of an NBA basketball game against the Oklahoma City Thunder in Oklahoma City, Monday, Dec. 27, 2010.

Grizzlies 96, Raptors 85

In Memphis, Tennessee, Zach Randolph scored 15 of his 21 points in the second half as the Grizzlies woke up from a slow start to beat the Raptors.

Tony Allen had 14 points and a season-high six steals, part of 15 Memphis steals on the night. Allen also had eight rebounds, also a season high.

Linas Kleiza led the short-handed Raptors with 22 points on 10-of-16 shooting. DeMar DeRozan finished with 18 points.

Hawks 95, Bucks 80

In Milwaukee, Al Horford had 18 points and 12 rebounds, Joe Johnson added 15 points as the Hawks beat the Bucks.

The Hawks (20-13) were back in Milwaukee for the first time since winning a pivotal Game 6 in the first round of the playoffs last year to send the series back to Atlanta where they won to advance.

They were impressive once again, opening a double-digit lead in the first quarter and shooting 50.7 percent from the field for the game.

John Salmons scored 18 for the Bucks, who struggled in their first home game after a successful Western Conference trip.

Magic 104, Nets 88

In Newark, New Jersey, Dwight Howard had 19 points and 13 rebounds to lead the Magic to their third straight win

with a victory over the Nets.

Hedo Turkoglu scored 20 points as the Magic had six players in double figures in beating the Nets for the third time in three meetings this season.

Orlando hit a dozen 3-pointers and shot 49 percent from the field despite the team showing up less than 90 minutes before the game because one of its buses got stuck in a snow drift on the way to the venue.

Devin Harris scored 24 points to lead New Jersey, which lost for the eighth time in 11 games.

Bobcats 105, Pistons 100

In Charlotte, D.J. Augustin scored 27 points, Stephen Jackson added 23 as the new-look Bobcats held on to beat the Pistons to give interim coach Paul Silas a victory in his debut.

With Silas using new combinations and forcing the pace after replacing the fired Larry Brown last week, the Bobcats built a 23-point lead and then nearly wasted it all.

Ben Gordon missed two tying 3-point attempts in the closing seconds before Tyrus Thomas' two free throws with 1 second left finally put it away for the Bobcats, ending a four-game losing streak.

Charlie Villanueva scored 25 points

on 10-of-14 shooting for the Pistons.

Timberwolves 113, Hornets 98

In Minneapolis, Michael Beasley scored 30 points, nine rebounds and a career-high seven assists to lead the Timberwolves to a victory over the stumbling Hornets.

Wes Johnson added a career-high 24 points and made six 3-pointers for the Timberwolves, who have won back-to-back games for just the second time this season.

Chris Paul had 22 points and 13 assists for the Hornets, who lost their seventh straight road game and are 7-12 after starting the season 11-1.

Trail Blazers 96, Jazz 91

In Salt Lake City, LaMarcus Aldridge scored 26 points as the Trail Blazers halted a four-game road losing streak with a victory over the Jazz.

Deron Williams scored 31 points, including back-to-back 3-pointers that pulled the Jazz within 94-91 with 7.7 seconds left. But Andre Miller made a pair of free throws to seal the win for Portland.

The game was Matthews' first in Salt Lake since he left the Jazz for a five-year, \$34 million deal with Portland after last season.

Rockets 100, Wizards 93

In Houston, Kevin Martin scored 20 points, Shane Battier and Aaron Brooks each added 15 and the Rockets won their fifth straight game, beating the Wizards.

Luis Scola had 14 points and Jordan Hill added 13 points and seven rebounds for the Rockets, who've won eight consecutive home games heading into Wednesday's showdown against Miami.

Kirk Hinrich scored 19 points and Andray Blatche had 17 points and 14 rebounds for the Wizards, who dropped to 0-15 on the road this season. Washington has lost 10 of 11 overall.

Warriors 110, 76ers 95

In Oakland, California, Monta Ellis scored 22 points and a season-high 12 assists to help Golden State to its third straight victory, beating the 76ers.

Stephen Curry added 17 points, including seven straight during a decisive run in the fourth quarter when the Warriors (12-18) pulled away.

The three-game winning streak is Golden State's longest since it won three in a row in April 2009.

Jrue Holiday had 23 points and 11 assists for Philadelphia (12-19) while Elton Brand had his eighth double-double in 13 games with 16 points and 16 rebounds.

Marty Cordova's daughter in coma after crash

By JON KRAWCZYNSKI
AP BASEBALL WRITER



Marty Cordova spends his days and night at the hospital, hanging on every word from the doctors and looking for hope wherever he can find it. His 15-year-old daughter was in a car accident and has been in a coma for 11 days.

"If anybody knew her or met her for one minute, you'd realize what a sweet kid she is," said Cordova, who spent nine years in the majors and was the 1995 AL Rookie of the Year with the Minnesota Twins.

On the morning of Dec. 16, Ashley McAdam was heading to Herriman High School just outside Salt Lake City. She was a passenger in a vehicle driven by a friend that was hit by a truck as it pulled into school. In addition to the head trauma, she broke her jaw, elbow and thighbone.

Cordova, who lives in Las Vegas and works for a company that designs mobile applications, rushed to her side after he heard the news. He has spent the past six or seven nights in the hospital.

So far, she has been unresponsive. Cordova and Ashley's mother, Tamara McAdam-Burleigh, have set up a Facebook page titled "Supporting Ashley McAdam," where people can offer support. Friends and family have written dozens of messages and posted songs, photos and videos.

The teenage driver of the car broke her collar bone, and a passenger in the back seat needed back surgery. The truck struck the car right where Ashley was sitting.

"She's the victim of a tragic accident," Cordova said. "What I want is for people to see that this can happen to your own kids. Hug your kids, spend time with them. And pay attention when you're behind the wheel of a car. Anything can happen."

Ashley has been in intensive care since she arrived at the hospital. Doctors have told Cordova that different people respond in different ways to brain injuries. Her eyes have fluttered open in the last few days, but she is still not responding to voice commands or requests to squeeze a hand or blink an eye.

"They're hoping she'll come back 100 percent, but there's no way to tell what her brain is going to do," Cordova said. "There's no magic shot. There's no surgery to help. Only time can tell."

Her Facebook page includes a link where those interested can make a donation to help with what Cordova expects will be a massive medical bill.

Cordova broke into the big leagues with the Twins in 1995, hitting .277 with 24 homers and 85 RBIs. He drove in 111 runs the following year and also played with the Blue Jays, Indians and Orioles before his career ended in 2003.

NBA BRIEFS

Heat-Lakers draw best rating for regular season game since 2004

NEW YORK (AP)—The highly anticipated first matchup between the new-look Heat and the defending-champion Lakers drew the highest television rating for an NBA regular-season game on ABC since 2004. Miami's 96-80 Christmas win earned a 6.4 fast national rating Saturday. That's up 45 percent over the game in the same window last year, also a matchup between Los Angeles and LeBron James, then with the Cleveland Cavaliers. It's the best since a 7.3 for another Heat-Lakers meeting on Christmas six years earlier. ESPN said Monday the Celtics-Magic game on ABC drew a 4.6, up 39 percent from the matchup between the same teams last season. The average rating for the three

games on ESPN increased 20 percent from a year ago. Ratings measure the percentage of all homes with televisions tuned into a program.

Francis bolting Chinese team

BEIJING (AP)—Three-time NBA All-Star Steve Francis is leaving his Chinese team after playing in just four games over two weeks. Chinese media say the out-of-shape 33-year-old played just 14 minutes for the Chinese Basketball Association's Beijing Ducks. To the consternation of his coach, Francis left the stadium midway through the Ducks' 104-89 victory over the Jiangsu Dragons on Sunday. Francis had reportedly signed with the Ducks for \$800,000 for the 32-game 2010-11 season, a portion of which he will receive as a settlement. "I feel unhappy that I couldn't play the

game. I know I was not well-prepared physically to help the team on court. As the team is in hot form, I think it is best for both sides for me to terminate my contract," Francis was quoted as telling Beijing Television on Monday afternoon. A number of former NBA stars, including former All-Star Stephon Marbury, signed with Chinese teams this season following the lifting of a \$60,000 monthly salary cap. Ducks coach Min Lulei said he's been willing to provide a personal trainer for Francis, but the player merely asked for more game minutes. Beijing had hoped Francis would draw fans to games because of his name recognition as a former teammate of Chinese star Yao Ming with the Houston Rockets. Francis averaged 18.1 points and 6.0 assists in nine seasons with Houston, Orlando and New York. He was an All-Star

in 2002, 2003 and 2004. He was waived by Memphis in 2009.

Shaq fined \$35K for blasting refs

NEW YORK (AP)—Shaquille O'Neal has been fined \$35,000 by the NBA for his public comments about the officiating. O'Neal criticized the referees following the Boston Celtics' 86-78 loss at Orlando on Christmas. He was angry after picking up his sixth foul when Magic center Dwight Howard fell to the ground as they were wrestling for position. O'Neal said: "I just wonder why I've never gotten that call in 20 years. Don't pick and choose when you're going to make the call. ... That's what happens when you've got control freaks." The NBA announced the fine on Monday.

2010 Rotary Caging Finals

PHOTOS By WALTER SUTHERLAND



The Ol'Aces' Juan Maratita pulls up for a shot against the Sonics' Angelo Salas.



The Sonics' John Paul Villanueva goes for a layup against Ol'Aces defenders during their U19 title game.



The Sonics' Christian Mizer, right, draws a foul on a Rollers A defender during their title game in the U15 division of the 2010 Saipan Rotary Club Youth Basketball League at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.



The Sonics' Leo Galarse goes up for a fancy shot against Ol'Aces players.



The Ol'Aces' Trevor Ogumoro slices through the defense of the Sonics.



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Saipan Tribune Sports



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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

All-CNMI finals in Guam tennis tourney

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Melody Johnson and Mikayla Lopez arranged an all-CNMI finals in the U16 singles division of the 2010 Guam Junior Open Championships after downing separate opponents last Monday at the Rick Ninete Tennis Center in Hagatna.

Johnson was paired against Guam's Caroline Loynd in the U16 singles semifinals and nailed a 6-0, 6-1 victory to advance to the finals. The other semis pairing had Lopez also posting straight sets win over Ashley Nadler, 6-0, 6-0, to force the duel with Johnson.

In the U14 doubles, Johnson



From left, Melody Johnson, Mikayla Lopez, and Tammy Ackerman pose for a group photo before leaving for Guam for the 2010 Guam Junior Open Championships last Sunday.

and Lopez are also in the finals and will be facing Nadine Del Carmen and Summer Morrison.

The two CNMI tennis players are also entered in the girls U14 singles and topped separate foes in the first round to make it to the



semifinals.

Johnson was pitted against top seed Camdyn Nadler in last Monday's game with the CNMI bet pulling off a 6-1, 6-1 upset over the Guam netter.

Johnson was playing Lopez in the semifinals yesterday. Lopez

booked the second semis seat in the upper half of the draw after edging Del Carmen, 6-0, 6-2. Results of Lopez and Johnson's semis U14 singles duel were unavailable at press time due to rain delays yesterday.

Besides Johnson and Lopez, two other CNMI bets competed

See ALL-CNMI on Page 26

Fil-Taga plans tourney for Father Manny

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER



The board of directors of Fil-Taga Golfers Association will

be holding a meeting on Jan. 4 to discuss a possible tournament in honor of the late Father Manny Corcuera.

Corcuera, who passed away on Dec. 19 due to lung cancer, is a member of Fil-Taga and had his last tournament with the club in August when he won the monthly ace tile.

Fil-Taga president Teddy Malaran said he will be convening the board and ask members for a schedule of tournament for Corcuera.

"Then, 80 percent of the proceeds from the tournament will be donated to his family," Malaran said.

Fil-Taga is also scheduled to turnover its donation for the medical and burial expenses

See FIL-TAGA on Page 26



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Fil-Taga president Teddy Malaran, seen here watching his ball during a tournament at Coral Ocean Point Golf Resort, said they will meet on Jan. 4 to discuss a tournament in honor of the late Father Manny Corcuera.

NMA nominates Sapong to OAA Council



Northern Marianas Athletics' Robin Sapong, fourth from left, seen here posing for a group photo with NMA officials and members during the 2009 NMA Awards Banquet has been nominated to the Oceania Athletics Association Council.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Northern Marianas Athletics nominated Robin Sapong to the Oceania Athletics Association Council.

Members of the OAA Council will be determined through an election scheduled during the OAA Congress on Feb. 4 in Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia.

"I am thankful to NMA for the nomination. Becoming a member of the council will give me another opportunity to help

in the development of athletics in the region," Sapong said.

Sapong was first elected to the OAA Council in 2007 as the Micronesian region's representative. He started getting involved in CNMI athletics as an administrator in 2003. He was also an athlete, having represented the Commonwealth in the 1994 and 1998 Micronesian Games in Guam and Palau, respectively. He ran in the 800m and relay races in both events.

Joining Sapong in the Council are outgoing OAA president Geoff Gardner of Norfolk

Island; Filimoni Vuli Waga of Fiji (Melanesian representative/vice president); Bill Bailey of Australia (IAFF area representative/Oceania); Danny Cocoran (Australian representative); Trevor Spittle (New Zealand representative); Willie Fong of Samoa (General Island representative); and Titaua Juventin of Tahiti (French Polynesian representative).

According to Sapong, the current eight-man OAA Council will be sliced down to six in February and there will also be some changes in the selection of council members.

"First, all elected will be named council members, no specific regional representation. However, no two members should come from one OAA member-nation," Sapong said.

"Second, Australia and New Zealand, which in the past years get automatic slots in the OAA Council, have to go through the election process," he added.

Sapong believes there are seven other individuals vying for the six seats in the council. They are from New Zealand, Tahiti, Samoa, Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micro-

See NMA on Page 26

Masters caging resumes next week

By WALTER SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER

The Master Basketball Federation of the NMI's 40A and 45A seasons is set to resume next Thursday, Jan. 6, at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

The first tip off goes up at 6:30pm with 45A action between Brotherhood and Top 45's followed by a 40A matchup featuring Armatech and AON Blood.

The House is undefeated in five games and sit atop the

40A division. Armatech is in second place with a win-loss record of 4-1, but Islander Rent-A-Car is hot on their trail at 3-1. Ol'Aces and Island Apparel are tied in fourth place with identical 2-2 records.

Jhem's Restaurant has only a win to show in five games played thus far, while AON Blood rests in last place with four defeats to open the season.

There is a three-way tie in a tight 45A division, Top 45's, See MASTERS on Page 26



WALTER SUTHERLAND
Brotherhood's Edeng Chaves goes for a layup during their game against Taga Security in the Masters caging early this month at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.